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JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT

“About five feet nine inches in height, slight and sinewy in his structure, but gracefully proportioned and eminently prepossessing in his personal appearance. His eyes are blue and very large, his nose aquiline, his forehead, over which his brown, curling hair is parted at the center, is high and capacious. He never shaves, but wears his beard neatly trimmed.”—*John Bigelow.*

A MAN UNAFRAID

The Story of
John Charles Frémont

By

Herbert Bashford *and* Harr Wagner



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Publisher's Foreword

The story of Frémont is told in these pages. The interpretation of his heroic life and actions are based on original source material. The prejudices of the first settlers have disappeared. The historians who had personal contact with men and measures of Frémont's time have passed on. The epoch-making journeys of Frémont and his men; the explorations of the Western lands; the acquisition of desirable territory, and the foundation of the new states, deserve at this time a new interpretation and John Charles Frémont a new and unprejudiced biographer.

The American Youth also needs the spirit of adventure which is illustrated in the life of Frémont. Non-fiction adventure should have a place in our schools and libraries. The adventures of "A Man Unafraid" are more fascinating, more inspiring, more illustrative of the superman, than the heroes of fiction. Frémont's life is one of the richest heritages of the West.

While the title page carries the name of Herbert Bashford and Harr Wagner as joint authors of the book, the actual work and literary style is due entirely to Herbert Bashford. Harr Wagner, as a student of California history, arrived at the conviction from source material which he possessed that Frémont deserved a new and sympathetic biographer. This volume is the result.

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF THE HEROIC
MEN WHO FOLLOWED FRÉMONT
THROUGH THE SNOW-CLAD
RANGES OF THE WEST AND WHO
SUFFERED INDESCRIBABLE
HARDSHIPS AND PRIVATIONS

To Frémont

Knowing but half, we are so quick to scorn
The deeds of others who have gone before;
Keeping unsaid, unsung, their goodly store
Of history which long years have dimmed and worn.

Of such a one I sing. Alone, forlorn,
He braved unventured soil for a rich land
Of plenty, held in his undaunted hand
The fate of men and cities yet unborn.

But mark you this—he held the magic lyre
Of Beauty ever singing in his heart,
Rare Beauty clothed in light and set apart,
Enshrined and worshiped like a temple fire.

Much good there is in him who loves soft rain,
Who welcomes like a child the shy sweet spring,
Or, silenced, stands to hear a late bird sing
A carol, high above some wind-swept plain.

His be the praise, for his was all the gain
Of seeking California, unafraid;
Forget all but the sacrifice he made,
Nor let the golden poppy bear a stain.

—Nancy Ellen White.

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Fremont crossed the pathless Sierras in midwinter. This picture shows the rugged and wild beauty of the mountains he knew and loved.

A Man Unafraid

CHAPTER I

A Son of the Old South

MARK TWAIN once said that, if you would be called a horsethief, just become a candidate for public office. The truth of this is well exemplified in the eventful career of John Charles Frémont. No nominee for President of the United States ever before or since was so abused and vilified as he. His nomination occurred at a critical time in American history and presaged the storm that was to follow. As the first candidate of the new Republican party, it was Frémont who bore the brunt of battle in the memorable campaign of '56. Around him centered the whirlwind of malice and slander, and many of the falsehoods current at that time in regard to "The Pathfinder" persist even to this day and have colored the pages of several alleged historians and biographers.

As an avowed opponent of slavery he brought down upon his head all the vituperation possible from the slave-holding states, and even more than Lincoln he inspired an intense hatred among Southerners in general. Although born in the South, his father-in-law a prominent Democrat, he was a consistent abolitionist—a pioneer in the cause of human liberty, just as he was a pioneer in the upbuilding of the West.

Those who entertain any prejudice against Frémont because of the mud-slinging campaign in which he was the storm-center, should take into consideration the fierce sectional feeling that existed at the time and allow his career to speak for itself—a career that is unparalleled in the history of the country.

Had he been elected in 1856 it is probable that the Civil War would have occurred some four years earlier than it did, and today Frémont would be the great national idol. As it was, he paved the way for Lincoln by giving to the new party a strength and an enduring quality that, perhaps, would have been impossible with any other nominee at that particular time. In this respect he was not only of great service to his party, but to the Union as well.

Frémont's was a full life. He lived every hour of the day. In the brief space of one year he had more varied experiences than fall to the lot of the average man in a lifetime. His activity was phenomenal. He had his faults—but the faultless man has no place in this world. Such faults as he had were of the heart and not of the head. At times he erred in judgment. With all his financial opportunities, he died a poor man. He was impulsive and highly sensitive, quick to take offense, and equally quick to forgive.

The perseverance of Frémont knew no bounds and his courage was sublime. Once he set himself to attain a certain goal, there was no turning back. He shrank from no undertaking, no matter how dangerous it might be or how many hardships it might entail.

His integrity was unquestioned, and those who knew him best loved him most. As a proof of his fine character, we may point to the strong and abiding friendship of those who shared his perils—men like Carson, Godey, and Fitzpatrick. Had the swivel-chair officials from West Point who assumed to mete out punishment to him in later years experienced one-tenth of the vicissitudes and sacrifices of Frémont, they might have accounted themselves among the glorious heroes of the age. But it must be remembered he did not hail from West Point, and therein lies the source of so much jealousy and prejudice.

Despite the success of his undertakings, he was singularly modest and unassuming. In his "Memoirs" there is not the slightest trace of egotism or conceit. He more often tells of the deeds and exploits of others and makes light of his own privations and suffering.

Those riding at ease today in the luxuriously appointed Pullmans, amid the canyons of the Sierra Nevada, seldom give a passing thought to that band of starving, emaciated men who followed Frémont day after day up those rugged mountain walls in the blinding snows of mid-winter. His was a life to fire the imagination of youth—daring, fearless, and determined, and to him more than to any single individual we owe the acquisition of California.

Frémont's love for the out-of-doors, of adventure and exploration, was no doubt due to inherited tendencies. Prenatal influence undoubtedly had much to do in determining his future. He was destined to become a great man. He had the right

father and the right mother; from each he received those special qualities which made him what he was.

His father, after whom he was named, was a Frenchman born near Lyons. He was of a nomadic nature, with artistic and scientific impulses, and possessed an excellent character. The roving spirit was strong in him, and at a comparatively early age he left his home port and sailed for St. Dominique to join his aunt. It was an adventurous undertaking, for France and England were at war and the seas were unsafe, for a Frenchman in particular. The ship on which he sailed was seized by a British man-of-war and taken to an island of the West Indies. Here Mr. Frémont busied himself as a basket-maker and, also, as an interior decorator. Finally he was either liberated or escaped, possibly the latter, and managed to make his way to Norfolk, Virginia, in the hope of returning to his native land. For some time he tutored in French, and as he was educated in English he became a prime social favorite among the townspeople.

In the course of time he met a young lady whose maiden name was Ann Beverley, but who had unfortunately married a wealthy, but irascible old gentleman, Major Pryor. He was forty-five years older than his wife, who had consented to marry him when she was only seventeen. Her relatives insisted on the marriage for financial reasons. Of course the December and May affair resulted in unhappiness, as might be expected. They managed to live together for twelve years, which was an age to the beautiful young wife. Then, through the influence of friends, the Virginia Legislature granted

her a divorce, and at the age of twenty-nine she was free to marry again, which she did, her choice of a husband being the French tutor, John Charles Frémont. Her relatives, who were connected with the family of George Washington, were much opposed to the marriage, but this time Ann followed the dictates of her own heart. Major Pryor was afterward wedded to his housekeeper. He was then in his seventy-sixth year, and how this marriage terminated is not recorded, but it is safe to say that it did not last long. Mrs. Frémont obtained possession of a part of her inheritance, so with what her husband had they managed to live comfortably.

They had a mutual liking for ethnology and the open air. Investing in a camp outfit, they spent much time in traveling about the South in most agreeable companionship. It was a sort of gypsy existence they led, roving from place to place and studying the various Indian tribes, who had millions of acres of land in that section. They had their own horse and carriage, and stopped here and there whenever convenient, sometimes camping out under the stars. The lure of the open road appealed to them strongly, and it was while making a temporary stop at Savannah, Georgia, that John Charles Frémont was born, January 21, 1813.

Little wonder, considering the nomadic life of his parents, that in future years he should plant the Stars and Stripes on one of the loftiest peaks of the Rockies or that he should name the entrance to San Francisco Bay "The Golden Gate"!

At the time when Frémont was a little more than seven months old, his future father-in-law,

Thomas H. Benton, then a young man of thirty-one, engaged in a pistol duel with Andrew Jackson, the bullets from the weapons passing through the walls of the room which the Frémonts were occupying. No one was hurt in the fray, and in after years the two noted Democrats became fast friends. It was the intention of the elder Frémont to return to France, and after the birth of two more children, a girl and a boy, he began to make preparations for the voyage, but his health failed and he died in 1818. The widow decided not to accompany her brother-in-law, who was to go with them, on such a long journey to a foreign land, but moved to Charleston, South Carolina.

At an early age young Frémont entered the law office of John W. Mitchell, a prominent attorney of Charleston, who took a great interest in the precocious youth, employing a teacher for him in the person of Doctor John Robertson, a Scotchman and a graduate of Edinburgh. His pupil must have been very extraordinary and possessed of unusually lovable qualities by what Doctor Robertson says of him:

“I at once put him in the highest class, just beginning to read Cæsar’s Commentaries, and, although at first inferior, his prodigious memory and enthusiastic application soon enabled him to surpass the best. In short, in the space of one year he had with the class and at odd hours he had with himself, he read four books of Cæsar, Cornelius Nepos, Sallust, six books of Virgil, nearly all of Horace, and two books of Livy; and in Greek all Græca Majora and four books of Homer’s Iliad. . . . I have hinted

that he was designed for the church, but when I contemplated his bold, fearless disposition, his powerful inventive genius, his admiration of war-like exploits, and his love of heroic and adventurous deeds, I did not think it likely he would be a minister of the Gospel. He had not, however, the least appearance of any vice whatever. On the contrary, he was the very pattern of modesty and virtue. I could not help loving him, so much did he captivate me with his gentlemanly conduct and extraordinary progress. When under my instruction I discovered his early genius for poetic composition. When the Greek class read the account that Herodotus gives of the battle of Marathon, the bravery of Miltiades and his ten thousand Greeks raised his patriotic feelings to enthusiasm and drew from him expressions which I thought were embodied a few days later in some well-written verses in a Charleston paper on that far-famed, unequal but successful conflict against tyranny and oppression, and, suspecting my talented pupil to be the author, I went to his desk and asked him if he did not write them, and he, hesitating at first, rather blushingly confessed he did."

As will be seen, Frémont in his youth gave ample evidence of future distinction. There was much of the poet in his nature, combined with a strong sense of the dramatic and a vivid imagination. His boyish brain pictured a life among the vast unexplored regions of America, great prairies stretching away to the horizon and mighty mountain ranges rolling like huge billows against the western sky.

As is frequently the case with temperamental

and impetuous boys of seventeen, he fell madly in love, the object of his passion being a beautiful Creole girl. He completely lost his head and the affair raised havoc with his studies, but it was a passion that "extended its refining influence" over his whole life.

"I was fond of study," he writes, "and in what I had been deficient easily caught up with the class. In the new studies I did not forget the old, but at times I neglected both. While present at class I worked hard, but frequently absented myself for days together. This infraction of college discipline brought me frequent reprimands. During a long time the faculty forebore with me because I was always well prepared at recitation, but at length, after a formal warning neglected, their patience gave way and I was expelled from college for continued disregard of discipline. I was then in the senior class. In this act there was no ill feeling on either side. My fault was such a neglect of the ordinary college usages and rules as the faculty could not overlook, and I knew that I was a transgressor. . . . I smiled to myself while I listened to words about the disappointment of friends and the broken career. I was living in a charmed atmosphere, and their edict only gave me complete freedom. What the poets dwell on as the rarest flower of life had bloomed in my path—only seventeen, I was passionately in love. This was what made me regardless of discipline and careless of consequences."

Several years after this the faculty had a change of heart and conferred upon him the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts. About this time two

books came into his possession which filled his soul with delight. One was a "chronicle of men" in which there were brave and noble deeds recorded and there was one on practical astronomy, but in the Dutch language. However, the maps were clear, whether he could read the text or not, and the work instilled in him a love of astronomy which grew with advancing years, and which was a great aid to him in his explorations. For a time he was instructor in mathematics to senior classes in various schools, but he was growing older all the time and felt that he must engage in something that would insure a permanent livelihood. Through the help of a friend of the family he was given the position of mathematical instructor aboard the sloop of war *Natchez*, which departed for a three-year cruise in South American waters. When he returned to Charleston in 1830 he was passed by an examining board of the navy for a professorship at Norfolk. He did not accept the position tendered him, however, as Fate willed otherwise. There was a lawsuit in Charleston which involved a certain rice field and called for an accurate survey of the property in order to establish its boundaries. Because of his mathematical ability, young Frémont was engaged to do the work. So successfully did he accomplish it that he decided to become a civil engineer, and before long an opportunity presented itself which gave him practical experience in his chosen field. A preliminary survey of a route for a railway line between Charleston and Cincinnati was undertaken by the United States Topographical Engineers, and Frémont was appointed one of the assistants. It was

his first taste of roughing it, and he found camp life very fascinating. His next task was a military reconnaissance of various Southern states, where much of the land was occupied by Cherokee Indians. It seemed that President Jefferson had decided to remove these tribes of the southern and eastern sections of the United States to some place west of the Mississippi. The removal was completed under President Jackson. The Cherokees, the last of the tribes to remain, were very much opposed to the change and some trouble with them was anticipated. Of this particular work Frémont says:

“The accident of this employment curiously began a period of like work for me among similar scenes. There I found the path I was destined to walk. Through many years to come the occupation of my life was to be among Indians and in waste places. There were to be no more years wasted in tentative efforts to find a way for myself. The work was laid out and it began here with a remarkable continuity of purpose.”

This survey, undertaken in the winter, had to be finished in as brief a time as possible. On arriving at the Cherokee camp the party found the men were having a great carousal and were in no frame of mind to treat the surveying crew hospitably, so the squaws, who were sober, hid them in a log cabin half filled with shucked corn, where they passed an uncomfortable night, with the rats chasing over them, shivering from the cold, and their ears assailed by the cries of the drunken Indians.

The wild life in the wintry woods, the nights around the camp fire, and the many adventures

whetted the appetite of the young engineer for more extensive operations in newer lands. His ambition was soon realized, for he had a friend whose influence meant much to him. The friend was the Secretary of War, Mr. Poinsett, whose name is rather familiar to the majority of people on account of his discovery of the beautiful flaming flower which bears the name *Poinsettia*. At his suggestion, President Van Buren appointed young Frémont second lieutenant of the United States Topographical Corps. He was ordered to accompany a noted French savant, Jean Nicolas Nicollet, who was to survey a prairie region between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and as far north as the Canadian line.

Nicollet was a remarkable man, and Frémont was very fortunate to come under his influence, as from him the younger man learned many things of a scientific nature that proved of inestimable value in later years. Nicollet was a member of the French Academy and had been given the decoration of the Legion of Honor. He was an expert mathematician and a musician as well, so the finer things in life appealed to him very much. He had had an eventful career and was now striving to overcome his financial difficulties, with the government behind him. Frémont regarded his association with Nicollet as a stroke of good fortune, and well he might, for to him it was a school of practical experience conducted by an eminent scientist. He joined Nicollet in St. Louis, where he recalls meeting for the first time General Robert E. Lee, at that time a Captain in the United States Engineers. Among the Catholic clergy of St. Louis the French savant had many

friends, and he introduced Frémont to them, and they had many pleasant times together, all of which in after years was used against "The Pathfinder" in his race for the presidency.

He spent the seasons of 1838 and 1839 with Nicollet. In the party were several men of prominence, including M. de Montmort of the French legation and an expert German botanist, Charles Geyer. As the region to be examined contained no mountainous sections, the transportation was by wagon. Canadian voyageurs were employed as drivers. Their route was to Big Swan Lake, along the Warju River and across the Coteau des Prairies and to the Red Pipestone Quarry, concerning which the Indians have a belief that the spirit of the Red Pipestone speaks in thunder and lightning whenever a visit is made to the Quarry. Strange to say, a storm broke upon the party on arriving there. The expedition afforded numerous exciting incidents, among which was a prairie fire that nearly cost them all their belongings. The Lieutenant also had his first experience in hunting buffalo, which terminated in a way that caused him much concern. In the midst of the furious chase he found himself separated from his comrades, alone on the vast prairie. He says:

"I could nowhere see any of my companions, and, except that it lay somewhere to the south of where I was, I had no idea of where to look for the camp. The sun was getting low and I decided to ride directly west, thinking that I might reach the river hills above the fort while there was light enough for me to find our trail of the morning. In this way I

could not miss the camp, but for the time being I was lost. My horse was tired, and I rode slowly. He was to be my companion and reliance in a long journey and I would not press him. The sun went down and there was no sign that the river was near. While it was still light an antelope came circling around me, but I would not fire at him. His appearance and strange conduct seemed uncanny but companionable, and the echo of my gun might not be a pleasant one. Long after dark I struck upon a great number of paths, deeply worn and running along together in a broad roadway. They were leading directly toward the river and I supposed to the fort. With my anxiety relieved I was walking contentedly along, when I suddenly recognized that these were buffalo trails leading to some accustomed great watering place. The discovery was something of a shock, but I gathered myself together and walked on. I had been for some time leading my horse. Toward midnight I reached the breaks of the river hills at a wooded ravine, and just then I saw a rocket shoot up into the sky, far away to the south. That was camp, but apparently some fifteen miles distant, impossible for me to reach by the rough way in the night around the ravines. So I led my horse to the brink of the ravine, and on going down I found water, which I brought up to him, using my straw hat for a bucket. Taking off his saddle and bridle and fastening him by his long lariat to one of the stirrups, I made a pillow of the saddle and slept soundly until morning. He did not disturb me much, giving an occasional jerk to my pillow, just enough to let me see that all was right. At the

first streak of dawn I saddled up. I had laid my gun by my side in the direction where I had seen the rocket, and, riding along that way, the morning was not far advanced when I saw three men riding toward me at speed. They did not slacken their pace until they came directly up against me, when the foremost touched me. It was Louison Freniere. A reward had been promised by Mr. Nicollet to the first who should touch me, and Louison won it. And this was the end of my first buffalo hunt.”

To be lost on the prairie in an Indian country is no laughing matter. The various lakes and rivers of the region were sketched and there were astronomical observations; the latitude and longitude of their position were taken daily and much material was gathered. To avert trouble with the Indians—the Cheyennes in particular—they invited some of the chiefs to their camp to “indicate the time and route” for their march. Accordingly, the chiefs escorted the explorers to their village and pointed out a camping place. The village consisted of three hundred lodges and some two thousand Indians of various tribes. The members of the party were invited to eat in the lodges of the several chiefs. They were given choice bits of buffalo meat and in turn they entertained the Indians, when a humorous incident occurred.

Mr. Nicollet, in preparing the soup, which he served, put a small portion of Swiss cheese into it to give it a pleasant flavor, but the Indians, on tasting the soup, looked at each other in astonishment, thinking they were poisoned. However, the interpreter showed them the cheese and explained that it

was a favorite food of the white man, when confidence was restored and the dinner resumed with great satisfaction.

In the autumn the prairies were covered with flowers of exceptional beauty — the asters and golden rod growing in profusion throughout the lowlands. The labors of the expedition closed on the banks of the Mississippi and in November Frémont, with a detachment of the party, found himself at Prairie du Chien in a bark canoe. A steamboat was about to start down the river for St. Louis, but he decided to take a needed rest and wait for the next one. Here he learned a valuable lesson, for the "next one" left the following spring. Thus he learned the value of a day. But, as there is no loss without some small gain, he became proficient as an ice-skater, the river being frozen over from bank to bank. However, after a hard trip by wagon through Illinois, the party reached St. Louis, and Frémont went on to Washington to assist Mr. Nicollet in preparing the material collected on the expedition. On arriving at the Capital the Lieutenant learned of the death of his brother. He had lost his sister some time before, and the mother was now left alone. He paid a visit to Charleston, which served to console her to some extent, and, then, with Lieutenant Scammon, devoted himself to the map material of Nicollet. In this work he came in contact with another highly gifted man in the person of Mr. Hassler, superintendent of the Coast Survey. He was a Swiss by birth, and, like Nicollet, was quite original in his scientific work, though very abrupt in his language and the exact opposite of

Mr. Nicollet. They occupied quarters in the Coast Survey Building overlooking the waters of the Potomac. It was situated on Capitol Hill, and here Frémont enjoyed the bachelor apartments of these two scientists. It was a good opportunity for him—the close association with two men who had devoted their lives to scientific pursuits. Their conversation was an inspiration to the Lieutenant and he learned much that proved of immense value to him in his future work. It was while working with Mr. Nicollet that Frémont met Senator Benton, who was greatly interested in the report of the expedition. In writing of this he says:

“The results of our journey between the two great rivers had suggested to him the same work for the broader field beyond the Missouri. . . . In the course of his inquiries he dwelt on the unoccupied country beyond the Missouri, the existing, uncertain, and incomplete knowledge concerning it. The interview left on me a profound impression and raised excited interest. The ideas suggested remained fixtures in my mind. The thought of penetrating into the recesses of the wilderness region filled me with enthusiasm—I saw visions. Formerly I had been entirely devoted to my intended profession of engineering. In this interview with Mr. Benton my mind had been quick to see a larger field and differing and greater results. It would be travel over a part of the world which still remained the New—the opening up of unknown lands; the making unknown countries known. This interview with Mr. Benton was pregnant with results and decisive in my life.”



JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT

Mrs. Frémont was a devoted wife, a helpful companion, and shared many of the hardships and all of the ideals and visions of her famous husband. She loved California, and spent her last days in Los Angeles.

Both Frémont and Nicollet were frequent visitors at the home of Senator Benton, where they met a number of men of influence and standing, among whom was Benton's colleague, Senator Linn of Missouri. Owing to the ill health of Nicollet, Frémont and Scammon were obliged to do most of the office work in connection with the topographical reports.

The Lieutenant's friendship with Senator Benton led to a most important event in his career—a life-long romance. The Bentons had four daughters and a son, Randolph, a lad of twelve years. Jessie, the second daughter, was attending school at Georgetown, and Frémont accompanied her elder sister to a concert, where he met her for the first time. She was only fifteen, but the "bloom of her girlish beauty" captivated him, and the impression she made upon him grew stronger as the months passed by. She came home during the school vacation, and the two saw much of each other. It was a case of love at first sight with both of them, and it was also a case of love that did not run smoothly, for the Bentons were not at all pleased with the turn of events. They were greatly perturbed when they learned how matters stood. In the first place, they had other plans for their daughter, and, anyway, Jessie was entirely too young to think of marriage. Not that in point of character they had anything against Frémont, but the lovers should wait a year at least. However, he was always well received at the Benton home.

Nicollet wished to have the lower part of the Des Moines River surveyed to add to his map—a section then occupied by the Sacs and Fox Indians—

and Frémont was requested to do the work. In a spiritless and down-hearted way he set out to the discharge of this duty, not convinced that absence makes the heart grow fonder. He was accompanied by Geyer, the botanist, and the work was put through in short order. It is quite probable—and Frémont insinuates as much—that the order to survey the Des Moines River originated with the Bentons, who had hoped that a lapse of time would cause the lovers to forget, but it only increased their fervor. It had been arranged that a year should pass before their marriage, but to lovers a year is as an age, and they decided that it would be very foolish to be separated for so long, therefore on October 19, 1841, they quietly departed for the home of the Reverend Father van Horseigh, where they were united in marriage. Of course they afterward received the parental blessing. Frémont was twenty-eight, while his bride was seventeen. He pays the following tribute to his wife in the "Memoirs":

"Her qualities were all womanly, and education had curiously preserved the down of a modesty which was innate. There had been no experience of life to brush away the bloom. She had inherited from her father his grasp of mind, comprehending with a tenacious memory; but with it a quickness of perception and instant realization of subjects and scenes in their completed extent which did not belong to his; and with these warm sympathies, a generous pity for human suffering, and tenderness and sensibility that made feeling take the place of mind."

The marriage of the Frémonts proved one of the

happiest in history, and as time went on Mrs. Frémont became noted for her high intellectual qualities. She was the wife for "The Pathfinder," a help-mate in every sense of the word.

In a coterie of friends in Washington Senator Benton was the leading spirit, and it was decided among them the time had arrived for some definite action in regard to the Territory of Oregon. The idea was to open the way for emigration through the mountains, "to indicate and describe the line of travel and the best position for military posts; and to describe and fix in position the South Pass on the Rocky Mountains at which this initial expedition was to terminate." However, it was not alone a survey the coterie had in mind. There was something else far more important—something of inestimable value to the United States. It was this that Senator Benton, with prophetic vision, saw and the realization of which was his fondest dream—a great Western empire under the flag of the American Republic. In this ambition he had a devoted champion in Frémont. They were both determined that California should not be lost to us, and "resolved to wrest back this region and hold it where it belonged." In fact, Mr. Benton had talked the matter over with Mr. Jefferson, whom he visited in 1825.

"The occupation of the lower Columbia by American emigration and the enforcing of our title to its whole valley and the Pacific north to the forty-ninth parallel had already been the aim of his persistent effort before he entered political life."

Mr. Benton introduced a bill in Congress to authorize the President to use a detachment of the

army and navy to act efficiently in protecting American interests in Oregon. To show the crass ignorance then existing in regard to the great Northwest, the bill was vigorously opposed. Senator Dickinson of New Jersey exposed his lack of knowledge of the territory under consideration by saying that "from the meridian of Council Bluffs extending to the Rocky Mountains the country can never be cultivated and, of course, never admit of a civilized population." He also asked if the Territory of Oregon can ever become a member of this Union. He scouted the idea that the West would ever amount to anything save as a hunting ground for Indians. Mr. Benton was unwearied in his efforts to obtain from Congress some recognition of the importance of the Western territory to this country, and on his monument erected in St. Louis are the prophetic words:

There is the East;
There is the road to India.

And this road ran directly west to the Golden Gate—a road that Benton visioned and Frémont made a reality.

CHAPTER II

First Expedition to the Rocky Mountains

The Topographical Bureau ordered the party to explore the country lying between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains, but this was so limited in area that Frémont proposed an extension to include South Pass which was granted. As will be seen it was to be a survey, but the real object of the expedition was known only to the select few in the confidence of Senator Benton. It became in reality an auxiliary to the Oregon emigration. To this, no doubt, President Harrison would have given his hearty sanction, but Mr. Tyler was not in sympathy with any movement calculated to aid Oregon settlement. Little money was advanced, therefore, to defray expenses and to obtain this required prudence and caution. The closest economy was to be observed in outfitting.

At first it was planned to send Mr. Nicollet as head of the party, but owing to his continued ill health and the certainty of hardships it was decided that Lieutenant Frémont should take full charge, so on May 2, 1842, he bade good-by to his young bride and set out for St. Louis, then the most important city of the West and the point of departure for Western expeditions. While in St. Louis, where he remained several weeks, he was the guest of Mrs. Sarah Benton Brant, a niece of Senator Benton. There was much to do in preparing for such a journey. In the first place it was necessary to engage

men of the right sort. Lucien Maxwell was chosen as hunter. He was fairly well acquainted with the various Indian tribes and was a man upon whom reliance could be placed.

On leaving St. Louis, Frémont traveled by steamer up the Missouri to a point near the mouth of the Kansas River, where Kansas City now stands. It was while making this steamboat trip that he met the man whose name was to be linked with his in all the explorations of Western territory—Kit Carson. This noted scout was just returning from St. Louis, where he had gone to place his little daughter in a convent in that city. Carson was then in his thirty-third year. He was a native of Missouri, according to Frémont, and since the age of fifteen, had spent his life on the Western border as trapper and guide. He was an unerring rifle shot and was more than successful as an Indian fighter—in fact, the most celebrated character in the annals of Western history.

“Small in stature and slenderly limbed,” says G. F. Ruxton in describing him, “but with muscles of wire, with a fair complexion and quiet, intelligent features, to look at Kit none would suppose that the mild-looking being before him was an incarnate devil in Indian fighting and had raised more hair from the heads of redskins than any other two men in the Western country, and yet thirty winters had scarcely planted a line or furrow on his clean-shaven face. He was first in every quality which constitutes excellence in a mountaineer, whether of indomitable courage or perfect indifference to death or danger, with an iron frame capable

of withstanding hunger, thirst, heat, cold, fatigue, and hardships of every kind; of wonderful presence of mind and endless resources in time of peril; with the instinct of an animal and the moral courage of a man who was taller for his inches than Kit Carson."

Frémont was greatly pleased with Carson, whom he found quiet and unassuming, with a frank speech and address. It had been the Lieutenant's intention to engage an old mountaineer named Drips as guide, but when Carson announced that he himself was available, Frémont did not hesitate to engage him. Thus began the long association and enduring friendship of the two.

The Lieutenant had engaged the services of twenty-one men in St. Louis, most of them Creole and Canadian voyageurs, who had been in the employ of various fur companies in the Indian country. As topographer he engaged Mr. Charles Preuss, a native of Germany, who had come to Frémont with a note from Mr. Hassler while he was still in Washington. Preuss did not impress the Lieutenant very favorably at first. His face was a rosy red and in his anxiety he stammered considerably—so much so, in fact, that Frémont took him outside the house to talk with him, thinking it was a case of intoxication. But the poor fellow was without any means of support on account of the failure of an appropriation, and was almost speechless on account of hunger and nervousness. It was at Christmas time and his family were in want. In a few moments Frémont realized his predicament and came to the rescue. They remained friends ever after.

Aside from the twenty-one men composing the party there were Henry Brandt, a youth of nineteen, and Randolph, the young son of the Bentons. One can well imagine what such a trip meant to a lad of twelve years. It meant a life in the great out-of-doors and adventure galore, with enough exciting incidents to keep the blood well stirred. The men were well armed and all mounted, save for those who drove the carts, which contained the provisions and instruments. They camped an hour or so before sunset when the carts were arranged so as to form a barricade, in the center of which the tents were pitched, and, as night came on, the horses were picketed. Guard was maintained as soon as they reached the country where it was thought a necessary precaution. The first day, June 10th, it rained and the party got a thorough soaking.

On the 14th of June they reached the ford of the Kansas River near the present city of Topeka, and, owing to the late rains, they found the waters swollen and as turbulent as those of the Missouri. They experienced much difficulty in crossing, Frémont bringing into service his india-rubber boat, which he had brought with him for the survey of the Platte River. This boat was original with the Lieutenant. It was five feet in width and twenty in length and had air-tight compartments. But these seemed useless, for in making the trip across the raging current the boat capsized, emptying men, carts, boxes, and bales into the river. Two of the party nearly lost their lives. But those on shore leaped to the rescue and almost everything was saved except some bags of coffee and sugar. And to

lose coffee at such a time is a deprivation, indeed! On account of the indisposition of two of the party Frémont laid over the following day, during which time the provisions were dried out and the cart covers painted.

A few days passed without anything of interest occurring and they approached the country where the Pawnees ranged. These Indians, when in sufficient number, were given to plundering emigrant trains. Game was plentiful, elk and antelope showing themselves at intervals. It was here that a night guard was first kept. Carson had the watch from ten o'clock till midnight, and to him were assigned young Brandt and the still younger Benton. They were stationed some distance apart and in the night Frémont could hear Randolph call to Carson when his imagination became too vivid and he fancied he heard some prowler in his immediate vicinity. This must have been a novel and highly alluring experience for a boy of such tender years. But what could be more fascinating? The sleeping camp, the dying fire, the rustle of the night wind in the overhanging trees, the white moon drifting above the lonely ridge, the mournful hoot of the owl and the occasional complaint of some nocturnal visitor; then the moments of intense silence, almost oppressive—the brooding spirit of the solitude—all these gave a thrill to the heart of youth that could never be forgotten.

One evening, while stopping near the present town of Kearney, three Indians came into camp—two men and a small boy. They were Cheyennes, who had been on a horse-stealing expedition among

the Pawnees and had failed miserably. They were now making their escape. The boy and Randolph soon struck up an acquaintance and Frémont invited them to supper. For several days they accompanied the party, which was going in their direction, and some valuable information was gained from them as to the water courses of the country.

The herds of buffalo grew more numerous and of greater size and many were the furious rides in pursuit of the monarchs of the Western prairie lands. One of these hunts is well described by Frémont:

“As we were riding quietly along the bank a grand herd of buffalo, some seven or eight hundred in number, came crowding up from the river, where they had been to drink and commenced crossing the plain, eating as they went. . . . It was too fine a prospect for a chase to be lost; and halting for a few moments, the horses were brought up and saddled and Kit Carson, Maxwell, and I started together. They were now somewhat less than half a mile distant and we rode easily along until within about three hundred yards when a sudden agitation, a wavering in the band, and a galloping to and fro of some that were scattered along the skirts, gave us the intimation that we were discovered. We started together at a hand gallop, riding steadily abreast of each other, and here the interest of the chase became so engrossingly intense that we were sensible to nothing else. We were now closing upon them rapidly and the front of the mass was already in rapid motion for the hills, and in a few seconds the movement had communicated itself to the

whole herd. A crowd of bulls, as usual, brought up in the rear, and now and then some of them faced about, and then dashed on after the band a short distance and turned and looked again, as if more than half inclined to stand and fight. . . . My horse was a trained hunter, famous in the West under the name of Proveau, and with his eyes flashing and the foam flying from his mouth, sprang on after the cow like a tiger. In a few moments he brought me alongside of her, and rising in the stirrups, I fired at the distance of a yard, the ball entering at the termination of the long hair and passing near the heart. She fell headlong at the report of the gun, and checking my horse, I looked around for my companions. At a little distance Kit was on the ground, engaged in tying his horse to the horns of a cow, which he was preparing to cut up. Among the scattered bands, at some distance below, I caught a glimpse of Maxwell; and while I was looking a light wreath of white smoke curled away from his gun, from which I was too far to hear the report. Nearer, and between me and the hills, toward which they were directing their course, was the body of the herd, and giving my horse the rein we dashed after them. A thick cloud of dust hung upon their rear, which filled my mouth and eyes and nearly smothered me. In the midst of this I could see nothing and the buffalo were not distinguishable until within thirty feet. They crowded together more densely still as I came upon them and rushed along in such a compact body that I could not obtain an entrance—the horse almost leaping upon them. In a few moments the mass divided to the right and

left, the horns clattering with a noise heard above everything else, and my horse darted into the opening. Five or six bulls charged on us as we dashed along the line, but were left far behind, and singling out a cow I gave her my fire, but struck too high. She gave a tremendous leap, scoured on faster than before. I reined up my horse and the band swept on like a torrent, leaving the place quiet and clear.”

That night the camp was disturbed by the howling of wolves, which ventured very near, and in the morning sat not far off, impatiently waiting for the start when they could fall upon the bones of the buffalo.*

On arriving at the mouth of the South Platte they crossed it as rapidly as possible owing to the quicksands and the next day, which was July 3rd, they cached a barrel of salt pork in view of their traveling companions, the Cheyennes, who had a dislike for pork and would not return to dig it up. They continued up the left bank of the South Platte for some twenty-five miles. Wood was scarce and they utilized “buffalo chips” for fire purposes. The next day was the 4th of July and it was celebrated in true American style by a morning salute and much enthusiasm. A small portion of liquor was served to the men by way of a special treat and a feast was prepared, consisting of macaroni soup, buffalo meat, fruit cake, and preserves, obtained in St. Louis and kept for just such occasions. Too much rum was imbibed by the Cheyenne lad and he

*In Frémont's day thousands of American bison were to be found on the Western plains. Today they are practically extinct. With no game laws to protect them, it shows how soon the buffalo have been depleted through ruthless slaughter.

became "extremely drunk," much to the delight of the Creoles and voyageurs.

On arriving at the junction of the North and South forks of the Platte, Frémont decided to divide his party, the main contingent to proceed to the American Company's Fort at the mouth of the Laramie Fork, where they were to await his arrival. Meantime he was to ascend the South Fork for the purpose of making observations relative to the establishment of posts on the line connecting the settlements with the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains by way of the Arkansas and South and Laramie forks of the Platte. He was accompanied by Mr. Preuss and four men, including his "favorite," Basil Lajeunesse. However, as Mr. Preuss's horse was in poor condition the Lieutenant sent him back after the first day to rejoin the others.

They traveled over a sandy region for some time with groves of trees on the opposite side of the river. As they were riding along they noticed horses' tracks, which indicated the presence of Indians. Furthermore they found the carcass of a buffalo recently killed, and were now more than watchful, scanning the horizon with their glasses, but seeing nothing to cause alarm. Then they espied some dark objects on the hills, which they at first took to be buffalo, but in a short time discovered that they were Indians—two or three hundred of them. The condition of the Lieutenant's horses was not of the best—in fact, the one of Basil's had to be led. Frémont attempted to reach a line of timber before the Indians came up, but was unable to do so. The savages were riding rapidly and were naked save for

a breechcloth and looked very warlike. Frémont and his men had their fingers on the triggers of their guns in anticipation of serious trouble. It is evident the party were prepared to take sudden action, and just as Maxwell was about to fire he recognized the Indian in the lead and shouted, "You damn fool! Don't you know me?" These words in the language of his tribe apparently surprised the redskin, and as Frémont rode toward him he struck his breast and exclaimed, "Arapahoe!"

It seems that Maxwell, a year or so before, had been a trader among the Indians of the tribe and knew many of them. In a few moments the little band of explorers found themselves completely surrounded by the half-naked warriors, who asked all sorts of questions. They wanted to know who the Indians were in the rear and seemed disappointed when told they were Cheyennes, as they were looking for Pawnee scalps. In the Arapahoe village were twenty Cheyenne lodges, where lived the families of the Indians, and they began decorating themselves for the homecoming. Included in their wearing apparel were a number of calico shirts which the Lieutenant afterward learned were the property of his men. They also painted their faces with vermilion, given them by Frémont, and made themselves as presentable as possible in view of the fact that they brought back no Pawnee ponies.

There was an immense herd of buffalo in the vicinity, and the Indians planned to surround them, so the travelers dismounted and watched the sport. After the killing was over one of the chiefs asked Frémont to the village, where he and his party were

served with buffalo meat by the squaws. After passing around the pipe of peace the five or six chiefs, who had drifted in and who sat in silence, expressed a curiosity to know what brought the party into that region. Frémont explained to them the object of his journey, which was to establish military posts on the way to the mountains, and, while it was by no means pleasing information, it in no way changed their courteous attitude toward him.

The faint outlines of the Rocky Mountains were now discernible with Long's Peak showing dimly. On the morning of the 9th of July they saw several persons approaching on horseback, and, on reaching them, they were found to be two white men and a mulatto named Jim Beckwith, who had lived for a number of years with the Crow Indians and who, on account of some act of bravery, was made a chief. They were searching for a band of horses in charge of Mr. Chabouard, whose camp was some miles farther up the river, where they arrived later in the day. Here they were treated very hospitably, being served with mint julep and coffee, with the luxury of sugar.

In the evening of July 10th Frémont reached St. Vrain's Fort, situated on the South Fork of the Platte and about seventeen miles east of Long's Peak, where now stands the town of Evans, Colorado. Here the Platte becomes a mountain stream, its waters being crystal clear. They were received most cordially at the fort by Mr. St. Vrain. As Maxwell had passed most of his time between here and Taos, New Mexico, he was right at home among old friends.

From Mr. St. Vrain the Lieutenant obtained a couple of horses and two good mules. He also hired a Spaniard and two other men, but he was unable to get any provisions as the supply from Taos had not arrived. A few pounds of coffee were obtained, however, and in addition to this they had some dried buffalo meat. Though the mountains were near at hand, Frémont could not visit them as much as he would have liked to do, but the object of his survey lay in the ranges to the north.

His next point of destination was the Fort at the mouth of Laramie Fork, about a hundred and twenty-five miles distant. For a time their route was down the valley of the Platte, which resembled a beautiful garden, so varied and fragrant was the profusion of flowers. His course was almost due north and with the low line of the Black Hills on one side and the mountains on the other they proceeded, halting at noon for a brief resting spell at the Cache à la Poudre, a mountain stream a hundred feet wide and flowing over a rocky bed. It was here that Frémont turned an obstinate mule over to the Spaniard to ride. He describes the animal as a "perfect vixen" and it took half an hour to get the saddle adjusted, but once on her back the rider remained there despite all the furious efforts of the mule to dislodge him. No doubt the Lieutenant enjoyed the proceeding.

That evening they camped on Crow Creek, having traveled about twenty-eight miles. The next day they were in a desert country and suffered much from thirst, but toward evening came upon a beautiful stream with willows growing along its banks.



FORT HALL

Built in 1834. An important station on the Oregon Trail.



RESIDENCE OF KIT CARSON

Taos, New Mexico.

Here a buffalo was killed and the Lieutenant amused himself with hunting plants among the grass. The elevation was now over five thousand feet, and as they journeyed on the country presented a dreary aspect. It seemed as though it had been "swept by fires and in every direction the same dull, ash-colored hue, derived from the formation, met the eye." The party crossed three or four forks of Horse Creek in the distance of twelve miles, and Frémont was struck by the extraordinary geological composition of the region, the huge rocks resembling masonry at a little distance and the whole having the appearance of a fortified town. At the foot of Castle Rock they traversed winding passages cut by the waters of the hill where the walls rose from thirty to forty feet perpendicularly.

The heat of the next day was exceedingly oppressive, the horses traveling with difficulty and were almost exhausted when they reached the waters of the Platte. Here they found the tracks of the carts belonging to the rest of the party, which had been made a day or so before. The close of the next day brought them to Laramie's Fork, where was situated Fort Platte and, just beyond, Fort Laramie, maintained by the American Fur Company. It was on the bank of the river, "its lofty walls, white-washed and picketed, with the large bastions at the angles, gave it quite an imposing appearance in the uncertain light of evening." Close by were a number of lodges of the Sioux Indians, the whole forming a striking picture. Mr. Boudreau was in charge of the fort and he received the party most kindly. Frémont had letters for him

from St. Louis. The rest of the party were encamped on the river bank near the fort. They reported considerable hardship.

Mr. Preuss had kept a diary in which he recorded the happenings of each day. Once there was the cry of "Indians" and a great scramble for firearms and a quick galloping of scouts, but instead of Indians the horsemen they had sighted proved to be white traders and trappers, under the leadership of Jim Bridger, a noted Western character, to whom is credited the discovery of Great Salt Lake. Mr. Bridger informed them as to conditions ahead and the news imparted was rather disquieting. He said that in the vicinity of Red Buttes, which lay directly in the path of the Frémont party, the Sioux Indians had gone on the warpath and offered no quarter to any living white man. On account of his familiarity with the country Bridger had taken a circuitous route to reach Laramie Fort through the Black Hills, thus avoiding contact with the roving tribes.

These stories of Indian warfare threw a scare into some of Frémont's men. A number of them became greatly agitated and around the camp fire gruesome tales were told of horrible atrocities committed by the Sioux, all of which tended to increase the nervousness of the party. The following morning the majority of them were very much dispirited and several exhibited sheer cowardice, threatening to return to civilization; but after Clement Lambert, together with five others, declared he would follow Frémont to the end of his journey, no matter what happened, the discouraged and

timid ones decided to continue as far as Laramie Fork, where there was no possible danger. Of course these men could hardly be blamed for not wishing to risk their lives in an unequal contest with hundreds of Indian braves, but it is to Frémont's credit that the disturbing report made no impression upon him. Even Carson, who was one of the most experienced of Indian fighters, fully supported Bridger in his opinion of the danger to be encountered, and, accordingly, made his will, an act which completely upset the morale of the most of the men. It was then that Frémont determined to count noses, as it were, to find who would go with him and who would not. As for himself he felt in duty bound to complete the survey as he had requested his original orders to be changed to include the South Pass and not to reach it would place him in an embarrassing position. Moreover, he was not a West Pointer and, therefore, he must proceed rather than face the jibes of the graduates of that military institution. But more than any of these things his determination to continue was prompted by the spirit of downright bravery. He would not turn back.

That evening he gathered his men about him and explained to them that as a precaution he had engaged Mr. Bissonette as interpreter and had taken every possible means to insure the safety of the party; while he considered the stories of Indian outrages greatly exaggerated, he was willing to pay them what was due in case any of them wished to return, as his desire was to have only men with him on whom he could rely should occasion arise. Only one man came forward and asked to be discharged.

The others had become imbued with the spirit of their intrepid leader.

Considering discretion the better part of valor Frémont decided to leave Masters Brandt and Benton at Laramie Fort, where they would be in no danger. Randolph had endeared himself to the men and they regretted the decision, yet they knew it was for the best. In case of a fight a small boy might be in the way.

The Indians at the Fort betrayed their usual curiosity and Frémont says that his camp from morning until night was constantly crowded with them. His tent was the only place they respected, and here the chiefs and men of distinction were wont to gather. His astronomical instruments excited their curiosity very much and those that were used in "talking with the sun and the stars they looked upon with special reverence as mysterious things of great medicine."

Everything was ready for the departure, tents struck, horses saddled and the Lieutenant had walked to the fort to take the stirrup cup with his friends, when several Indian chiefs forced their way into the room in spite of all opposition and handing him a note, sat down in silence. The missive was from Mr. Bissonette informing Frémont that it would be highly dangerous for him to leave until the return of the young warriors within seven or eight days as they would probably fire upon him at sight. After reading the note and fully comprehending its import Frémont turned to one of the chiefs, who arose and addressed him, stating the cause of the Indians' grievance and his wish not to

see the party go on under the circumstances. Frémont, in reply, asked them to send two or three of their people with him until they should meet the young warriors, after which he would make them valuable presents. They declined this offer, saying there were no young men among them to go and anyway they would be afraid to interfere with them. After much talk the conference was broken up and the Lieutenant was about to begin his march when Chief Bull's Tail arrived to say they would send a young man along, but he was poor and had no horse and asked that he be given one. To this Frémont consented, and it was agreed that the young man should join them at their night encampment.

They continued their journey, traveling over an interesting plateau between the North Fork of the Platte on the right and the Laramie on the left. The first day nothing of special interest occurred except for the exciting time occupied in erecting an Indian lodge, which the Lieutenant had secured at the fort in lieu of his thin tent, which was not rain-proof. The next morning before breaking camp the young Indian engaged at the fort came up to the Lieutenant and asked to see his horse; otherwise he would proceed no further. Frémont was tempted to send him back to his people, but his presence seemed to give added confidence to the men, so a horse of his choice was picked out and the journey was continued.

In his observations the Lieutenant considered the neighborhood of Fort Laramie as a suitable place for the establishment of a military post, as it would prevent any coalitions as then existed among the vari-

ous Indian tribes and would also keep the road to Oregon open constantly through the Sweetwater Valley and the South Pass of the mountains. Means to safeguard the emigrants bound for Oregon was the chief concern of Frémont.

There was a scarcity of rain that year and the country was very dry. The creeks had shrunk until they were but dry beds and in consequence the animals suffered. The voyageurs, who depended upon the annual rise to get their furs to St. Louis, were disappointed, the rivers being low. There was little feed for the horses and mules; grass was in scant patches here and there, and the men had to cut boughs of the cottonwood for the animals to browse upon; and, altogether, the drouth presented a serious problem.

July 23rd was a day of some excitement as the scouts came in with reports that Indians were in the vicinity. The party at once turned toward the river, where they erected a barricade of the carts within which the horses were hobbled and picketed. The guns were discharged and reloaded and the men posted in advantageous positions. All was made ready to give the Indians a warm reception in case they appeared belligerent. Meantime the interpreter, accompanied by the young Indian, went to meet the redskins and in about ten minutes returned in company with two Sioux. They appeared very sulky, and it was with difficulty that Frémont was able to gain any information from them. They belonged to a party which had been following an emigrant train and which they overtook at Rock Independence. A disagreement arose among them, one

portion wishing to attack the train while the other opposed it; then they quarreled and finally separated, breaking up into small bands, the main part going over into the territory occupied by the Crows. The two encountered by the Frémont party were of those who advocated attacking the emigrants, and for this reason some of the Lieutenant's men suggested shooting them on the spot, but this was frowned upon and they glanced suspiciously at the well-armed voyageurs as they proceeded on their way.

It may be noted that Frémont was more than an amateur botanist. Each day found him recording and classifying in his notebook the names of the various plants and shrubs that came under his observation. He was a keen student and little of importance escaped his watchful eye.

A day's travel brought them to a pleasant grove where they erected scaffolds for the purpose of drying buffalo meat. The hunters were out, and in the afternoon came in with half a dozen cows, which were dressed and cut into small strips and hung on the scaffolds to dry for future use. It was the Lieutenant's idea to provide food for the next couple of weeks, should the buffalo prove scarce, and some time was spent in the drying process.

On July 28th the party forded the Platte and some four miles beyond came upon a band of Indians belonging to the Sioux tribe. They were part of a large village including Arapahoes and Cheyennes that had broken up and were now on the way home, the main portion having taken another route where feed would be more abundant. From these

Indians the Lieutenant gleaned some information not calculated to encourage him. In fact it was news of the most discouraging kind. Further on, it was reported, owing to the drouth and scourge of grasshoppers, there was not a buffalo to be found, or a single blade of grass. The Indians said they had almost starved and several of their horses had died.

The party faced a gloomy prospect. When the Indians had communicated all these things through the interpreter, Mr. Bissonette, he immediately turned to Frémont and advised that he abandon any attempt to proceed further. "The best advice I can give you is to turn back at once," he said. Again the Lieutenant summoned his men around him and told them what he had heard about the country beyond and again he left it to them to decide whether or not they would go on. As for himself he should continue. Here we see demonstrated the indomitable will and determination of Frémont. The word "can't" was not in his dictionary. He felt reasonably certain that he could count on five or six of his men remaining and, when he put the question to them as a whole, not a man flinched from the undertaking.

The next move was to divest the expedition of everything not necessary to its progress. A deep hole was dug in the bank near the river, where the things not essential to equipment were buried. The carts were carefully concealed among the willows, and thus stripped of all encumbrances, they proceeded on their way, following up the North Platte to the mouth of the Sweetwater and to the Red

Buttes, whose geological composition is mostly red sandstone. From this point Kit Carson became the guide as he was fairly familiar with the country, and during their midday rest grass was discovered in abundance.

So far the Indian reports were without foundation. After traveling about twenty-five miles they found a fine place to camp for the night, and the following morning, after going some twelve miles, they came upon a former Indian village, where there were numerous discarded poles lying about and the skeletons of horses. That night they camped on an island in the river where the grass was luxurious and from which point they could see bands of mountain goats on the hills above. They named their camp Goat Island. Two or three of these animals were shot by the hunters.

On the morning of July 31st the party left the course of the Platte to cross over to the Sweetwater, about fifteen miles distant. The hills along the route, rising to a height of eight hundred feet, were bare and rocky and on reaching the Sweetwater they camped for the night, giving the hunters a chance to get a few buffalo which had appeared in a near-by valley. Here they suffered a rainstorm and were without shelter of any kind except for the absinthe bushes, which only grow from two to three feet high. The next morning they moved up the river about seven miles and came to Rock Independence, which is of granite and is six hundred and fifty feet long and forty feet in height. It was almost entirely destitute of vegetation and bore the names of many travelers, missionaries, traders, and

not a few men known to science. This rock was a landmark on the Oregon Trail and nearly every one in passing had inscribed his name on its surface.

For the next few days it rained quite steadily, which, if it made traveling disagreeable, at least improved the grass and gave new life to the animals. On August 6th the party was in the midst of a rocky formation, huge walls of granite ranging from three to five hundred feet in height, bordering the roadway. Scraggly pines clung to the sides of the rocks and all about was "wilderness and disorder." Finally they reached an elevation of seven thousand feet, but the ascent had been so gradual they were hardly aware of the climb. Even Carson, who knew the country well, was forced to keep a sharp lookout to ascertain the culminating point. They were now three hundred and twenty miles from Fort Laramie and stood at the summit of South Pass.

"It will be seen," writes Frémont, "that it in no manner resembles the place to which the term is usually applied—nothing of the gorge-like character and winding ascents of the Allegheny passes in America; nothing of the Great St. Bernard and Simplon Passes in Europe. Approaching it from the mouth of the Sweetwater, a sandy plain, one hundred and twenty miles long, conducts, by a gradual and regular ascent, to the summit, about seven thousand feet above the sea; and the traveler, without being reminded of any change by toilsome ascents, suddenly finds himself on the waters which flow to the Pacific Ocean."

They were nine hundred and fifty miles from the mouth of the Kansas River, their starting point.

In after years Frémont was held up to ridicule for claiming to be the discoverer of South Pass, whereas he made no such pretension. It was discovered years before his time and he never so much as intimated that he was the discoverer. However, the story was circulated in the hope of belittling him in the eyes of the world.

Eight miles beyond the Pass the party came to the Little Sandy, one of the tributaries of the Colorado, which empties into the Gulf of California. In the clear, cold mountain air the Lieutenant had a fine view of the distant peaks gleaming like silver in the light of dawn. The sight of those ranges roused all the poetry of his nature and he feasted his eyes on their solitary grandeur—entranced by the supreme beauty and majesty of it all.

CHAPTER III

Across the South Pass

The party was soon amid the beautiful streams of the Wind River Range, where the sublimity of the scenery caused the Lieutenant to stand in awe and wonderment as he drank in the beauty of towering mountain peaks, glorified by the sun, and of pine-covered ridges overshadowing glassy pools or foaming waters. On winding his way up a dark ravine he came suddenly upon a lake set like a gem among the mountains. It was about three miles long and stretched away, glittering in the sunlight as if it might be a huge jewel. Its banks were of yellow sand and covered with a growth of aspen. It was the headwater of the third New Forks and Frémont made his main camp near its outlet on the north side, which was the most western point of his observations. He gave it the name of Mountain Lake.

Unfortunately, in crossing a creek, he had broken his barometer, the only one he had, and the loss deprived him of the means to determine scientifically the height of the mountains, which had been a subject of discussion among frontiersmen for some time. However, as necessity is the mother of invention, he set about to repair the instrument and how he accomplished this is best told in his own words:

“The glass cistern had been broken about midway, but as the instrument had been kept in proper

position no air had found its way into the tube, the end of which had always remained covered. I had with me a number of vials of tolerably thick glass—some of which were of the same diameter as the cistern—and I spent the day in slowly working on these, endeavoring to cut them of the requisite length, but as my instrument was a very rough file, I invariably broke them. A groove was cut in one of the trees where the barometer was placed during the night to be out of the way of any possible danger and in the morning I commenced again. Among the powder horns in camp I found one which was very transparent, so that its content could be seen almost as plainly as through glass. This I boiled and stretched on a piece of wood to the requisite diameter and scraped it very thin in order to increase to the utmost its transparency. I then secured it firmly in its place on the instrument with strong glue made from a buffalo, and filled it with mercury properly heated. A piece of skin which had covered one of the vials furnished a good pocket which was well secured with strong thread and glue, and then the brass cover was screwed to its place. The instrument was left some time to dry, and when I reversed it a few hours after I had the satisfaction to find it in perfect order.”

Frémont was now ready to begin the ascent of the mountains which are the source of four great rivers, the Colorado, Columbia, Missouri, and Platte. The provisions had become very low, the bread being entirely gone and their daily fare consisted of dried buffalo meat cooked in tallow, which was utterly without flavor. How meager this was can best

be appreciated when we consider that the party was capable of consuming two buffaloes every twenty-four hours.

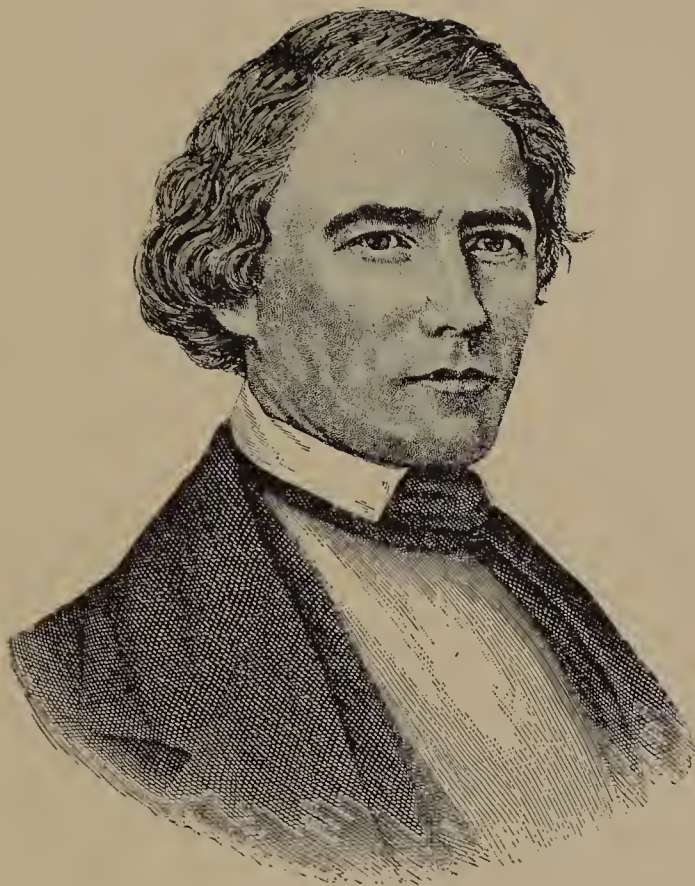
They were now in a hostile country where the utmost vigilance was necessary. Frémont selected fifteen of his best men for the mountain trip, the others remaining in camp, which was in charge of Bernier, one of his most trustworthy men. The fifteen left early in the morning, being well armed and mounted on mules. Meantime the camp had been made Indian-proof by the erection of an improvised fort, with twelve resolute men to keep guard. The Frémont party were soon among the rocky defiles of the ranges, enjoying the view of streams and lakes unknown to trappers of the region, picking their way along mountain slopes and breathing the fragrant odor of the pines.

“It seemed as if, from the vast expanse of uninteresting prairie we had passed over, Nature had collected all the beauties together in one chosen place. We were overlooking a deep valley, which was entirely occupied by three lakes, and from the brink the surrounding ridges rose precipitously five hundred and a thousand feet, covered with the dark green of the balsam pine, relieved on the border of the lake with the light foliage of the aspen. They all communicated with each other; and the green of the waters, common to lakes of great depth, showed that it would be impossible to cross them. . . . The air was fragrant with the odor of the pines, and I realized, this delightful morning, the pleasure of breathing that mountain air which makes a constant theme of the hunter’s praise.”

At intervals they came upon rare plants and flowers of brilliant colors, all of which was a constant delight to Frémont. As they continued their climb more lakes came into their vision—lakes of surpassing beauty as they lay without a ripple and reflecting the mountain walls surrounding them. They were headed toward the highest peak of the range, and finding the way growing somewhat difficult the Lieutenant decided to leave the mules in the care of a few of his men and go the rest of the way on foot. They took nothing with them but their firearms and the instruments, some of the men leaving their coats behind. As is the case in climbing high mountains, the first ridge usually hides a succession of others, and the rarefied mountain air makes distance very deceiving, consequently the Frémont party surmounted one ridge only to find another confronting them. In this way they went on until they were so fatigued and worn out that the Lieutenant decided to camp for the night. They had reached the timber line, and above them were only naked rocks and patches of snow. According to his barometrical observations they were ten thousand feet above the Gulf of Mexico. They had little to eat and Lajeunesse went in search of game, but returned without success. Frémont became ill, suffering from a severe headache and nausea, no doubt caused by the high altitude. To add to his discomfort a cold wind blew, so the fire gave little relief. Moreover, they tried to sleep on a granite ledge, but did not succeed and were glad when the morning sun laid his great warm hand on their broken and rugged world. They were astir shortly after day-

break and with empty stomachs again began their climb. Preuss had a bad fall in attempting to walk on an ice-ledge and turned several somersaults in his downward plunge, but fortunately escaped with only a few bruises. Lambert and Descoteaux were taken ill and the Lieutenant had a bad attack of giddiness and nausea. Not knowing how far his strength would carry him, he sent Lajeunesse back for the mules with the instructions to bring four or five of the animals to their last camping place, where he would meet them. Frémont retraced his steps and in a short time the mules and four men arrived. They brought a supply of dried meat and some coffee and in a little while all were feeling better.

The next morning they again attempted to scale the mountain. This time they went about it in a more leisurely fashion, going a short distance and stopping to rest, thus conserving their lung power. Save for a slight headache, Frémont experienced none of the disagreeable sensations of the previous day. By slow stages they gradually worked their way upward till at length the leader of the expedition made one final scramble and gained the summit. Immediately below him was a vast snowfield and a sheer, icy precipice. The crest was so narrow on which he stood that only one man at a time was permitted to mount it for fear it might give way. It was a pinnacle with almost a needle point. Here Frémont fixed a ramrod in the slight aperture between the rocks and unfurled the Stars and Stripes. It is safe to say our national emblem was never flown from a loftier height up to that time. This occurred on August 15th, and the historic flag



KIT CARSON

The famous scout and pathfinder. A personal friend of Frémont and whose knowledge of the country, the native Indians and climate greatly aided Frémont in his explorations.

which Frémont raised on one of the loftiest, if not the highest, peaks of the Rockies, can be seen today in the Southwest Museum of Los Angeles.

On this great eminence there was no sign of animal life. No sound broke the stillness. The solitude was profound. As the men stood there in awe at the sublime grandeur of the scene it was as though Nature held her breath in hushed expectancy of something about to happen—some tremendous upheaval or some revelation from the Creator in words of thunder. Suddenly there was a slight humming noise and one lone, humble bee came winging its flight from the east and alighted on the knee of one of the men. So they were not alone even at this high elevation, which was found to be thirteen thousand five hundred and seventy feet above sea level. It afforded the Lieutenant a wonderful view of the surrounding country. On one side they overlooked the springs of the Colorado River and on the other the Wind River Valley where were the heads of the Yellowstone branch of the Missouri, while far to the north could be discerned the snowy peaks where were the source of the Missouri and the Columbia rivers. The particular mountain he had climbed bears the name of Frémont Peak.

In the afternoon the party began the descent and by the time they had reached the cache the sun had set and they were obliged to spend the night in a disagreeable spot, sleeping on a huge rock. Daylight found them on their way again and at dusk that evening they joined the rest of the party, whom they found had enjoyed a quiet rest. It was a laughing, good-natured group that set out on the return

trip to civilization. No lives had been lost; there had been no battles with Indians as had been prophesied—not even a skirmish—and about the only privation suffered was an occasional lack of food.

They left Mountain Lake camp on August 16th, and after passing a “concourse of lakes and rushing waters, mountains of rocks naked and destitute of vegetable earth, dells and ravines of the most exquisite beauty, all kept green and fresh by the great moisture in the air and sown with brilliant flowers,” they arrived at their camp at Two Buttes on the way homeward. The only mishap was the breaking of the barometer for the second time, but as it had served its purpose the Lieutenant had nothing to regret from this accident.

While encamped at Rock Independence, Frémont made in the hard granite the impression of a large cross, which he covered with a preparation of india-rubber “well calculated to resist the influence of wind and rain.” He meant this as a symbol of the Christian faith and not of any particular religious sect, but in his presidential campaign years afterward it was used against him by those who wished to make it appear that he was identified with Catholicism.

In following out his instructions to survey the Platte River he decided to begin at this point and accordingly launched his india-rubber boat, taking with him Preuss and five men. The rest of the party in charge of Bernier were to proceed by land to a place designated by the Lieutenant where he was to join them. This journey by boat proved very hazardous—in fact, it came near to culminating in a

tragedy, for in attempting to steer their craft down a narrow gorge where the water rushed with great force they lost control of it completely, and Basil Lajeunesse, thrown into the raging current, owed his life to his skill as a swimmer. Later, in running the rapids, the boat was capsized and its contents strewn on the waters.

“For a hundred yards below,” says Frémont, “the current was covered with floating books and boxes, bales of blankets and scattered articles of clothing; and so strong and boiling was the stream that even our heavy instruments, which were all in cases, kept on the surface, and the sextant, circle, and the long black box of the telescope were in view at once. For a moment I felt somewhat disheartened. All our books—almost every record of the journey—our journals and registers of astronomical and barometrical observations—had been lost in a moment. But it was no time to indulge in regrets; I immediately set about endeavoring to save something from the wreck. Making ourselves understood as well as possible by signs, for nothing could be heard above the roar of the waters, we commenced our operations. Of everything on board the only article that had been saved was my double-barreled gun, which Descoteaux had caught and clung to with drowning tenacity. The men continued down the river on the left bank. Preuss and myself descended on the side we were on; and Lajeunesse, with a paddle in his hand, jumped on the boat alone and continued down the canyon. She was now light and cleared every bad place with much less difficulty. In a short time he was joined by Lambert and the search was

continued for about a mile and a half, which was as far as the boat could proceed in the pass. Here the walls were about five hundred feet high and the fragments of rocks from above had choked the river into a hollow pass but one or two feet above the surface. Through this and the interstices of the rock, the water found its way. Favored beyond our expectations, all of our registers had been recovered with the exception of one of my journals, which contained the notes and incidents of travel, topographical descriptions, a number of scattered astronomical observations, principally meridian altitudes of the sun and our barometrical register west of Laramie. Fortunately, our other journals contained duplicates of the most important barometrical observations which had been taken in the mountains. These, with a few scattered notes, were all that had been preserved of our meteorological observations. In addition to these we saved the circle, and these, with a few blankets, constituted everything that had been rescued from the waters."

While their loss was to be regretted they, themselves, were in a bad situation, for they had nothing whatever to eat and no means to provide themselves with any food, for their guns and ammunition were gone and they would be at the mercy of any band of redskins that might come along. With the danger of starvation facing them they set out in two parties, Preuss and Frémont keeping to the left side of the river, and the others to the right. On arriving at the top of the canyon, having made slow progress, Frémont found himself wearing only one mocasin. He was forced every few minutes to stop and

pull cactus thorns out of the bottom of his foot, which was a very painful experience. In a short time they were joined by another of the party, Benoist, the others having taken a more inland route.

Toward evening they reached a pass in the rocks called Hot Spring Gate, where Preuss discovered what he thought a fine cold spring gushing out some two feet above the river. Heated from his long tramp he was about to quench his thirst when he found that the water was very hot. The Lieutenant had no thermometer to determine the temperature of the spring, but he was only able to hold his hand in the water for two seconds. They arrived at Goat Island, where the majority of the party were in camp, to find some pieces of roasted buffalo meat awaiting them and some dry clothing. Thus terminated one of the most fatiguing days, Fremont says, he ever experienced.

Early the next morning Lajeunesse was sent to the wreck for the articles that had been saved, and about noon they left the island. On the 26th they arrived at Cache Camp and found everything as they had left it; and, traveling a few miles in the afternoon, camped for the night at the ford of the Platte, the waters of which were very low.

The quick eyes of the Indians caught their flag as they wound among the hills near Fort Laramie, and they were saluted with repeated charges from the one gun at the fort, and they returned the welcome with their rifles and pistols. It was in the nature of a home reception. They had been gone forty-two days, but had experienced none of the perils the Indians had described.

Continuing their homeward journey down the Platte they passed innumerable fields of brilliant flowers in their autumnal splendor, and also came upon great numbers of rattlesnakes, several of which were killed during one morning's ride. They crossed and recrossed the Platte to suit their convenience, as it was nothing more than a succession of sand bars, with rivulets running between them. They recovered their barrel of pork from its burial place, which proved a valuable addition to their stock of provisions. It now occurred to Frémont that he could descend the Platte by boat in that the water was growing deeper, and accordingly spent two days in making a "bull boat." This craft was constructed of the skins of a number of buffalo bulls provided by the hunters. It is quite probable that this idea originated with Carson. The skins were stretched over a frame made of willow, the seams being sewed together and covered with ashes and tallow, after which the boat was left exposed to the sun for the greater part of a day. With four men it drew about four inches of water. On the morning of September 15th the craft was given a trial, but it proved more of a sled than a boat, for it had to be dragged over the numerous sand bars for miles. At length Frémont gave the matter up as a bad job; the boat was abandoned and the party took to their feet and found traveling much more rapid and satisfactory.

In a few days they reached Grand Island, which is fifty-two miles long and is described by the Lieutenant as the best point for a military position on the lower Platte. On the 22nd they came to the village

of the Grand Pawnees, where they obtained some vegetables, and on the 24th they reached the Loup Fork of the Platte, which is a stream of clear water some four hundred yards in width and differing in many respects from the longer river in appearance.

A few days before the Lieutenant had sent Lambert and two men to Bellevue with directions to the manager of the American Fur Company at that place to have his carpenters construct a boat with which he had planned to make the trip down the Missouri. He was informed that the boat was nearing completion, and on October 1st, "long before daylight," he heard the welcome tinkle of cowbells on the opposite bank and felt that he was again within the pale of civilization. All the horses, carts, and camp equipage were sold at Bellevue at public auction. Frémont continued his sketching and observing all the way down the river to St. Louis, where he arrived on the 17th of the month. He reached Washington in due time and found his family well and eager with anticipation for his return.

With Mrs. Frémont as his amanuensis, Frémont now set about preparing his report of the expedition. At the suggestion of Mr. Benton a guide book was prepared for the use of the emigration, together with maps whereon were indicated the places where wood and water were to be found. The plants collected were turned over to Professor Torrey for classification. It was the first report of a scientific nature to be made and naturally attracted wide interest. An extra number of copies were ordered printed and Senator Linn went on to say in his re-

marks concerning the report that it showed a "beautiful and fertile" country far beyond the frontier of Missouri, whereas some former explorer had given an altogether different description of the region, saying it was mostly desert with a range of mountains that would always prove a barrier to the civilization of the West. Frémont in clear, simple language stated the facts as he saw them and he was the recipient of many congratulations on his success.

The Senators from Missouri had rejected the Ashburton treaty, which was designed to placate Great Britain in respect to the Oregon settlement, and in the President's message to Congress it was stated that before any titles to lands should be given to emigrants in the territory of Oregon the respective claims of the two governments should be settled. It must be remembered that at this time a number of men prominent in Congress held the most absurd views regarding the Far West. To them the whole Pacific Coast region was a barren waste—utterly worthless except as a home for Indians and grizzly bears. As viewed in the light of the present day the ignorance of these men was little less than appalling. But Senator Benton and some of his colleagues had determined upon a course of action which would prevent any joint occupation of Oregon as the English had suggested.

A second expedition, more extensive than the first, was then discussed by the coterie surrounding Senator Benton. Its purpose was to examine the region lying south of the Columbia, between the Rockies and the Pacific Ocean. This expedition was to con-

nect with the other at South Pass, thus giving a complete survey of the interior and western half of the continent. The Lieutenant was, of course, working in conjunction with Senator Benton, whose one great ambition was to know that the flag of these United States waved from ocean to ocean.

In the spring of 1843 Frémont left Washington, traveling in a stage coach and having with him his wife and the Benton family. The coach was overturned while they were crossing the mountains in Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Benton was stunned by a bruise on the head, from which she soon recovered. However, the accident necessitated a stopover at an old-fashioned tavern, where the party enjoyed "buckwheat cakes half an inch thick and maple syrup from the forest." Mrs. Frémont planned to remain in St. Louis until her husband's return, which they calculated would be in about eight months. The Lieutenant engaged six of the men who had been with him previously, and owing to his former experience, preparations were made in short order. From the arsenal at St. Louis Frémont obtained a howitzer, which he thought would prove effective should he encounter hostile Indians. He engaged as guide one of the best men possible, Thomas Fitzpatrick, who, although a young man, had a wealth of snow-white hair, the result of a terrible experience with Blackfeet Indians, in which battle he was the sole survivor. Maxwell joined the party at Kaw Landing and Carson at a little Mexican pueblo on the Arkansas River.

It seems that Frémont had specially requested his wife to open all letters addressed to him and, as long

as he was on the frontier, to forward any that she considered important. In other words, she was the confidential secretary. In after years Mrs. Frémont tells of a rather humorous incident that happened at this time.

“I was to open mail and to forward to the camp at Kaw Landing, now Kansas City, and all that in my judgment required Mr. Frémont’s attention. One day there came for him an official letter from his Colonel, the chief of the Topographical Bureau. It was an order recalling him to Washington, whither he was directed to return and explain why he had armed his party with a howitzer, saying that it was a scientific and not a military expedition and should not be so armed. I saw at once that this would make delays which would involve the overthrow of great plans and I felt that there was a hidden hand at work. Fortunately my father was absent from St. Louis and I could act on my own instinct. Without telling anyone of the order I put it away and hurried off a messenger to Mr. Frémont—one of his men, Basil Lajeunesse, who was to join him with the last things. I feared a duplicate order might have been sent to the frontier. . . . I charged Basil to make all haste, for much depended on that letter. I wrote Mr. Frémont that he *must not ask why*, but must start at once, ready or not ready. The animals could rest and fatten at Bent’s Fort. *Only go!* There was a reason, but he could not know it; my father would take care of everything. And as we acted together unquestioningly, he did go immediately. Not until I received the good-by letter did I write in answer to his Colonel. Then I

wrote him exactly what I had done. I had grown so into my father's purpose that now, when my husband could be of such large aid in its accomplishment, I had no hesitation in risking for him all consequences. Upon this second expedition hinged great results. It made California known in a way which roused and enlisted our people and led directly to its being acquired during the third expedition."

It seems on learning what his daughter had done. Senator Benton fully endorsed her action and "wrote a letter to the department condemning the recall, repulsing the reprimand which had been lavished upon Frémont, and demanding a court-martial for him when he should return." Benton laid the order for the Lieutenant's return to Washington to West Point influence. However this may be, it was evidently inspired by some ulterior motive—a great desire to handicap or embarrass Frémont, whose rise in military rank provoked much jealousy. To begin with it was an asinine order, and doubtless Mrs. Frémont regarded it in this light. To comply with it meant the loss of several weeks in getting started and, perhaps, would endanger the expedition, as no doubt there would be other charges trumped up that would delay the expedition indefinitely. That it was begun without the sanction of the Topographical Bureau is quite evident, the "coterie" having sufficient influence to put it through. For the Lieutenant to return to Washington from St. Louis to explain why he had a howitzer in his possession was manifestly absurd. With equal propriety and reason he might have re-

ceived orders to return to explain why the party should bear arms of any kind in that it was a scientific and not a military expedition. While the howitzer was not worth its weight in provisions it was looked upon by Frémont as a valuable weapon should the party be attacked by any number of Indians, which, of course, might happen. It was only for this reason that the Lieutenant requested the use of the gun.

Frémont, himself, regarded the order to return to Washington, when he learned of it afterward, as a "flimsy excuse for breaking up the expedition," and this it was. Little did Colonel Abert realize that his order to Frémont, a subordinate, was the one incident in his career to carry his name down to posterity. Military orders are much like orders of any other kind—they should be observed only when they are not preposterous and do not attain to the height of extreme absurdity. So far as Frémont was concerned his action in beginning the expedition at once, according to his wife's instructions, involved no insubordination on his part. The court-martial demanded by Senator Benton was never called, so it goes to show that there was no great infraction of military rules. Had a court-martial been convened its proceedings would have made good reading in the funny column of a newspaper, considering the triviality of the occasion. However, owing to the foresight and quick discernment of Jessie Benton Frémont, the expedition was not broken up as certain ones connected with the Army might have wished, but went ahead rapidly. Senator Benton and his colleagues would not permit

a little thing like a howitzer to stand in the way of empire had they known of the incident, and this the wife of the Lieutenant well knew and acted accordingly.

The Frémont party, like the one the year previous, was composed of Creole and Canadian French, with a scattering of Americans, not to mention a free colored man, Jacob Dobson, who had long been a servant in the Benton family. There were thirty-nine members in all, and through the Indian Agent, Major Cummins, he got two Delaware Indians as hunters. Mr. Talbot of Washington and Mr. Dwight of Springfield, Massachusetts, were with the party. They were armed with Hall's carbines, not to mention the troublesome howitzer in charge of Zindel, a German artilleryman. There were twelve carts drawn by mules and a light spring wagon in which the various scientific instruments were transported. The expedition left Kansas City on the 29th of May, 1843.

It was Frémont's plan to vary his course on this trip by going up the Kansas River Valley and on to the source of the Arkansas, where he hoped to find a pass in the mountains. This would give him additional knowledge of the region and possibly prove a better route to Oregon. In a few days he arrived at Elm Grove on the Santa Fé trail and found a party of emigrants bound for California. The cavalcade was under the leadership of J. B. Chiles of Missouri, who had some machinery with him for a sawmill which he intended to build on the Sacramento. Here also was met William Gilpin, bound for Oregon, of whom it is said he did as much for

the West as any other American. He was the first Governor of Colorado and served as Colonel of Battalion during the Mexican War.

Frémont followed the Oregon trail as far as the ford of the Kansas River and, rather than cross this stream, continued along its south bank over a beautiful well-watered region of hill and meadow, through dense groves and over prairie lands robed with spring flowers of gorgeous color. Once they met a party of Delaware and Kansas Indians, who were exceedingly friendly. They were returning from a hunt and were in good humor, much better than the band of Osages encountered a few days later. These redskins, in war paint and wearing red blankets, appeared in full pursuit of Maxwell, who had gone in search of a stray horse, and dashed right into the Frémont caravan, capturing some of the best horses. The Lieutenant was prepared for just such an emergency and chased the marauders seven or eight miles, recapturing the animals.

“This incident,” says Frémont, “which occasioned delay and trouble and threatened danger and loss, and broke down some good horses at the start, and actually endangered the expedition, was the first fruit of having gentlemen in the company—very estimable to be sure, but who were not trained to the care and vigilance and self-dependence which such an expedition required and who are not subject to the orders which enforce attention and exertion.”

On the 8th of June the party arrived at the Smoky Hill Fork, the principal southern branch of the Kansas. This river is classified differently to-

day than in Frémont's time. Here they traveled up the Republican Fork, continuing their journey through the beautiful rolling country, where they caught an occasional glimpse of elk and antelope, but only a glimpse, as the game proved very elusive owing to the various hunting parties of the Delaware and Kansas Indians. When they had gone nearly three hundred miles from the mouth of the Kansas the road became so difficult and progress so slow that the Lieutenant decided to divide his party, leaving Fitzpatrick in charge of twenty-five men, the provisions and heavier baggage, while he, accompanied by fifteen of the party, went ahead, taking the howitzer and the light spring wagon. For a number of days Frémont continued along the Solomon's Fork of the Smoky Hill River where he noted the many flowers and plants.

He crossed Kansas into Nebraska and on the 19th of June reports the appearance of prairie dogs and several buffalo, one of which was killed. The altitude kept increasing, while the character of the country changed. There was little fertility and the landscape became barren, presenting some of the aspects of a desert. They traveled at an elevation of about four thousand feet through a sandy, arid section where there was little or no water until, on June 20th, they found themselves "overlooking a broad and misty valley, where, about ten miles distant and one thousand feet below, the South Fork of the Platte was rolling magnificently along, swollen with the waters of the melting snows. It was in strong and refreshing contrast to the parched country from which we had just issued; and when, at

night, the broad expanse of water grew indistinct it almost seemed that we had pitched our tents on the shore of the sea." From their encampment at the mouth of Bijou Creek they obtained an excellent view of Long's Peak and the adjacent mountains, which stood out in the sunset light robed in their garments of glistening snow. On the evening of July 3rd in traveling along the overflowed bottoms of the Platte they were nearly devoured by swarms of mosquitoes. Here they met a number of Sioux Indians, who were hungry, as usual, and who were provided with buffalo meat by Frémont's hunters.

Arriving at St. Vrain's on July 4th they were entertained at dinner and had a royal time in celebrating Independence Day. The Lieutenant had expected to replenish his larder at this point, but was disappointed. The fort was in a rather impoverished condition and he was able to obtain only a small amount of unbolted Mexican flour and some salt. His horses and mules were not in the best of condition and he engaged Maxwell to go to Taos and there to buy a dozen mules, which he was to load with supplies and deliver to Frémont at a certain point on the Arkansas River known as the Fontaine qui Bouille, but now called Fountain Creek, the site of the present city of Pueblo, Colorado. A trading post had been established here the previous year by a number of traders and trappers. While at St. Vrain's Frémont discharged one of his men, Oscar Sarpy, the young man feeling that he was not cut out for such an active and dangerous life as that of exploring the West. He was given transportation to Fort Laramie, where he could go East by a more



SUTTER'S FORT, SACRAMENTO CITY

[Reproduced from a picture used in "Fremont's Memoirs,".]

Fremont made Sutter's Fort his headquarters and it was one of the most noted places during the forties in California. It is now one of the most interesting historical landmarks.

direct route. On July 6th Maxwell started for Taos on the Rio Grande, which town was the chief trading point of the Santa Fé trail.

Frémont continued his journey up the Platte, passing two abandoned forts, one of which was still in good condition, and later came to Fort Lancaster, the trading post of Mr. Lupton. Here was a regulation farm with all kinds of stock ranging about on the prairie and poultry of various breeds. After spending an agreeable hour with Mr. Lupton the Lieutenant set off in a rainstorm which lasted until the next morning. The day following the party came to a large village of Arapahoes consisting of about one hundred and sixty lodges. The chiefs extended a most cordial greeting, throwing their arms around the necks of the men of the party and embracing them with fervor. The Lieutenant says it required some skill in horsemanship to keep the saddle during this ceremony as their American horses exhibited toward the Indians the same fear they would have had for a bear or any other wild animal. He was not able to make the Arapahoes many presents, explaining to them that these things were in the custody of "White Hand," or "Broken Hand," as Fitzpatrick was known to them. While they were disappointed they were still courteous in their behavior.

That night they camped near the mouth of Cherry Creek, now within the site of the city of Denver. This stream is renowned for its variable rise and fall, sometimes being a mere rivulet and again a raging flood. During the next day they surprised a grizzly bear, which sat up and surveyed

the men and later made off across the river. When twenty-one miles from St. Vrain's Fort they reached a point on the southern fork of the Platte where the stream divides into three branches. It was up the eastern fork that Frémont took his way. Game was found to be scarce and occasioned some worry, but Lajeunesse had the good fortune to kill a deer, so the men did not go hungry. On account of the scarcity of game the Lieutenant turned eastward in search of buffalo, following the divide between the Platte and Arkansas rivers. There was a fresh fall of snow on Pike's Peak, the summit of which was now visible, appearing wonderfully white and beautiful. Frémont crossed the headwaters of the Kiowa River and passed the night at Bijou Fork, but he discovered no buffaloes and continued up the Bijou Valley to an elevation of seven thousand five hundred feet, where he found the country well adapted for agricultural purposes. Today it is one of the most prosperous regions of the West.

On the 14th of July the Lieutenant camped on the Arkansas at the mouth of Fountain Creek, where there was a small settlement and where he learned that matters were in a bad way at Taos. An attack had been made on all foreigners, and Maxwell's father-in-law had been forced to leave for Santa Fé. Frémont was greatly worried over Maxwell as it was considered probable that he would fall into the hands of the Spanish Utes, who were reported in the country through which he must pass. Under the conditions it would appear that the chance of getting any provisions from Taos was very slight. However, Kit Carson, the dependable,

joined the party here and was sent at once down the Arkansas to Bent's Fort for some mules. He was to meet the Lieutenant at St. Vrain's. A new man, Charles Townes, was engaged to take the place of Sarpy and had many of the qualities of a good voyager. A note was left for Maxwell instructing him to come on to St. Vrain's, and Frémont proceeded up Fountain Creek, looking for the "celebrated springs" from which the Fontaine qui Bouille was named. These springs are near the foot of Pike's Peak.

"On the afternoon of the seventeenth," writes Frémont, "we entered among the broken ridges at the foot of the mountains where the river made several forks. Leaving the camp to follow slowly, I rode ahead in the afternoon in search of the springs. In the meantime the clouds, which had been gathered all the afternoon over the mountains, began to roll down their sides; and a storm so violent burst upon me that it appeared I had entered the storehouse of thunderstorms. I continued, however, to ride along up the river until about sunset and was beginning to be doubtful of finding the springs before the next day when I came suddenly upon a large, smooth rock, about twenty yards in diameter, where the water from several springs was boiling and bubbling up in the midst of a white incrustation, with which it had covered a portion of the rock. As this did not correspond with the description given me by the hunters I did not stop to taste the water, but dismounting, walked a little way up the river and passing through a narrow thicket of shrubbery bordering the stream, stepped

directly upon a huge white rock at the foot of which the river, already become a torrent, foamed along, broken by a small fall. A deer which had been drinking at the spring was startled by my approach and, springing across the river, bounded off up the mountain. In the upper part of the rock, which had apparently been formed by deposition, was a beautiful white basin, overhung by currant bushes in which the cold, clear water bubbled up, kept in constant motion by the escaping gas and overflowing the rock, which it had almost entirely covered with a smooth crust of glistening white. I had all day refrained from drinking, reserving myself for the spring, and as I could not well be more wet than the rain had already made me I lay down by the side of the basin and drank heartily of the delightful water. The spring is situated immediately at the foot of lofty mountains, beautifully timbered, which sweep closely around, shutting up the little valley in a kind of cove. As it was beginning to grow dark I rode quickly down the river on which I found the camp a few miles below."

Frémont's excursion into the branches of the upper Arkansas and the completion of the survey of the South Fork of the Platte having been accomplished he returned to St. Vrain's on July 23rd, where he found Carson awaiting him with ten good mules. Fitzpatrick and party were also there with everything in good order. This intrepid leader had conserved his food supplies and consequently there was an abundance of provisions on hand. The animals had also fared well and had enjoyed a good

rest. While here Frémont learned that the Cheyennes he had befriended on his previous expedition had murdered several trappers in the neighboring mountains, which goes to show that most good Indians are invariably dead. The Indian bears a reputation for treachery, and while at times he has been imposed upon by unscrupulous whites, he has certain racial characteristics which it would seem he cannot overcome, and chief among these are cruelty and intrigue.

Again Frémont decided to divide his party, one of which, under the guidance of Fitzpatrick, was to cross the plains to the Laramie River, and taking the usual emigrant road from there was to meet the Lieutenant at Fort Hall on the Snake River. As the Delawares were anxious to return to their homes, Alexis Godey, a young hunter, was engaged in their stead. Godey, who was then twenty-five, was said by Frémont to rank next to Carson in courage and professional skill, which is high praise indeed, but which was well substantiated in the eventful years that followed. Frémont's plan was to cross the mountains through the valley of the Cache a la Poudre River, which would take him to the head of the Sweetwater and to South Pass. With him went a Shoshone squaw, who had lost her husband at Lupton's Fort and who took this opportunity to return to her own people.

The two parties separated on July 26th and began their respective journeys. The Lieutenant had some difficulty in crossing the Platte owing to the late rains, but struggled through and in a few days reached the Black Hills, more properly designated

as the Laramie Mountains. They found the Cache a la Poudre to be very swollen and frequent crossings incurred no little danger. However, in due time they came out of the mountains and camped for the night close to the boundary line between Colorado and Wyoming. Frémont found many plants and shrubs to excite his interest, among which was the Yampa Root, prized very highly by the Indians as an article of food. When some two hundred miles from St. Vrain's the party stopped for a day to dry some buffalo meat. While thus engaged a band of sixty Indians came storming into camp. They were Arapahoes and Cheyennes and pretended they had mistaken Frémont's men for those of another tribe with whom they were at war. This was a lame excuse, but it was accepted and the usual formalities of friendship were enacted in which the pipe of peace was smoked and presents were made.

One afternoon they were very much surprised by the appearance of a big red ox and gathered around him as if he had been an old friend. The ox no doubt had wandered away from some emigrant train and had fortunately escaped the redskins. Frémont would not permit him to be killed, preferring to go hungry for a while longer.

In this section of the country traveling was quite difficult because of the rank growth of artemisia, which interfered greatly with the progress of the light wagon and rendered walking almost impossible. This shrub is more familiarly known as sage brush, so nearly every one accustomed to traversing the Western table-lands knows something of its disagreeable character.

After entering the pass of Medicine Butte, where the elevation was found to be over eight thousand feet, they continued their way over the high plains to the west, where buffaloes were discovered, and where Carson shot a cow much to the delight of the party. They then traveled toward the North Fork of the Platte over a country thick with sage brush growing from four to six feet in height. Aside from this there were deep ravines and gulches all of which proved a handicap. During this battle—for such it was—the carriage lamps were knocked off, a thermometer broken and several other articles damaged. After going some distance further on they came to the river where Frémont went into camp and proceeded to dry some more buffalo meat. After a severe struggle in which the shaft of the gun carriage was broken, they reached the valley of the Sweetwater and were again on familiar ground. Here they struck the road leading to Oregon, a rather broad highway with no sage brush to hinder. Continuing up the valley they gained an elevation of seven thousand two hundred feet, a height attested by the coolness of the air and the white frost at dawn. They were soon in the vicinity of South Pass, which is twenty miles in width. On reaching the dividing ridge barometrical observations were taken which showed the pass to be seven thousand four hundred and ninety feet above sea level. From this point to the mouth of the Columbia is approximately one thousand six hundred miles, about midway between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean.

From the South Pass the Lieutenant followed the Sandy, a tributary of the Green River, and camped

on its left bank some seventy miles from the pass. The Green River Valley, in which he now made his way, was a noted region where the traders and trappers had gathered in past years. It was here a number of years before that Kit Carson had engaged in a memorable duel with a bullying Frenchman named Shuman, whom he wounded in the wrist, the story of which is told in detail in the biographies of this famous scout. The heavily wooded shores of this stream offered a distinct contrast to the dry, sandy plateau over which the Frémont party had traveled. The name Green River had been given it by the Spaniards, but the Shoshone and Utah Indians called it the Bitter Root. It is a beautiful stream to which Frémont refers as the Colorado of the West. Twenty-six miles of travel brought the caravan to Black's Fork of the Green River, where they camped, and the next few days found them in an inhospitable region, where the plants and shrubs were less numerous, though the sage brush remained to harass them. One of their mules died owing to insufficient food, and to avoid delay Carson was sent on to Fort Hall to arrange for a small supply of provisions. The weather was hot, the road dusty and altogether the trip, after crossing the Green River, was disagreeable.

In following up one of the small tributaries of that river they arrived at an elevation of over eight thousand feet, this being a ridge connecting the Bear River Mountains and the Wind River chain of the rockies. It is the highest point the road reaches between the Mississippi and the Pacific. The view from here showed a very mountainous country seen

dimly through a pall of smoke. The descent on the western side of the pass was quite steep and the frequent growth of willows along the roadway suggested the presence of water, but as there was none to be found they went on until dark before going into camp. An hour's travel the following morning brought them to the valley of the Bear River which empties into Great Salt Lake, around which the superstition of the trappers had inspired many wild and impossible tales. Says Frémont:

“We were now entering a region which for us possessed a strange and extraordinary interest. We were upon the waters of the famous lake, which forms a salient point among the remarkable geographical features of the country and around which the vague and superstitious accounts of the trappers had thrown a delightful obscurity which we anticipated pleasure in dispelling, but which in the meantime left a crowded field for the exercise of our imagination.”

While Jim Bridger is said to have discovered Great Salt Lake it appears that little was known of it up to the time of Frémont's visit—nothing authentic, at least; so it remained for him to make a scientific examination of this body of water. It was thought to have no outlet, but various trappers insisted in the belief that somewhere on its surface was a terrible whirlpool, indicating the passage of water through a subterranean course to the Pacific Ocean. Many were the conjectures advanced by Frémont's men as they discussed it around the camp fire.

Following along the river bank on the well-traveled road to Oregon they came upon a party of emi-

grants, and the Lieutenant noted the fine appearance of their oxen. A few miles below the mouth of Thomas's Fork, one of the river's larger tributaries, they encountered a great train of emigrants. The sight of their many covered wagons stretched along the river bank, the smoke of the camp fires curling lazily upward, the children playing hide-and-seek, while the women busied themselves in preparing the evening meal, the cattle grazing contentedly near by, and the general atmosphere of comfort and serenity that hovered over all, formed a most pleasant picture and one which Frémont always remembered. This was the advance guard of Western civilization, the sturdy pioneers who crossed to the far waters of the Pacific and there hewed out a mighty empire with their brawny hands.

CHAPTER IV

Frémont Becomes "The Pathfinder"

It was the custom of all emigrants to spend a few days in this locality for the purpose of rest and recuperation and to refresh their animals before reaching the upper Columbia—an uninviting region where feed was particularly scarce. The next morning Frémont met two Shoshone Indians, who told him they came into the valley from the mountains and that a large village was not far away. Thinking to purchase some horses from them, the Lieutenant turned aside and when within a mile of the Indian encampment a single brave dashed out, followed by others, until the whole plain was teeming with mounted redskins, all armed with lances, bows and arrows, and wearing their war bonnets from which floated long red streamers. They charged down upon Frémont with all the appearance of hostility when they discovered that the flag he was carrying was not the war emblem of their old enemy, the Sioux, but that of the United States. In a few moments an understanding was reached and the chief invited Frémont to the village where the object of his visit was made known. He purchased eight horses, paying for them with knives, blankets, red and blue cloth, tobacco, etc. Some roots and seeds were also obtained, among them being the *kooyah* or tobacco root, the odor of which was so repugnant to Preuss as to drive him out of camp.

Where the Bear River makes its horseshoe turn to the south are a number of soda springs and the Frémont party camped at one of these known as Beer Springs, so named by the trappers on account of the acid taste of the water and the effervescing gas. The various springs in this locality were analyzed by Preuss and it was found that the smell of the gas gave one a sensation of dizziness and caused a slight nausea.

The appearance of the country at this point suggested some volcanic disturbance in ages past. There were numerous bright-colored stones and curious rocky formations that elicited Frémont's attention. A short distance beyond the Beer Springs the Oregon trail turned westward, but the Lieutenant did not follow it, his intention being to make an examination of Great Salt Lake. As his food supply was limited, he sent one of his men to Fort Hall with a note to Carson requesting him to load a pack horse with whatever provisions he could obtain and to endeavor to overtake the party on the river. Two half-grown calves were picked up, probably strays from some westbound caravan, and were driven along as reserve food. Frémont was now in the territory inhabited to a considerable extent by the Digger Indians who subsist wholly on roots and seeds, the country being destitute of game.

The Lieutenant was very anxious to reach Great Salt Lake and bent all his efforts to that end. Together with Basil Lajeunesse, he made a short trip down the Bear River in his india-rubber boat, which had been carried along for use in crossing streams, but was forced to cache his craft and walk some

fifteen miles over a rough broken plain in order to reach camp. He was visited by a number of Indians of the Digger tribe, who threw aside their blankets to show him their emaciated bodies. They were without game of any kind and could not exchange the little food they had for the many tempting things they were offered, saying it would expose them to temporary starvation. It seems that formerly this region abounded in buffaloes, but these animals were gradually killed off by the fur companies. Commenting on the destruction of the buffalo, Frémont says:

"The extraordinary rapidity with which the buffalo is disappearing from our territories will not appear surprising when we remember the great scale on which their destruction is carried on. With inconsiderable exceptions, the business of the American trading posts is carried on in their skins; every year the Indian villages make new lodges for which the skin of the buffalo furnishes the material; and in that portion of the country where they are still found the Indians derive their entire support from them and slaughter them with a thoughtless and abominable extravagance. Like the Indians themselves, they have been a characteristic of the great West and as, like them, they are visibly diminishing, it will be interesting to throw a backward glance through the last twenty years and give some account of their former distribution through the country and the limit of their range. The information is derived principally from Mr. Fitzpatrick, supported by my own personal knowledge and acquaintance of the country. Our knowledge does not

go farther back than the spring of 1824, at which time the buffaloes were spread in immense numbers over the Green River and Bear River valleys and through all the country lying between the Colorado, or Green River of the Gulf of California and Lewis' Fork of Columbia River; the meridian of Fort Hall then forming the western limit of their range. The buffaloes then remained for many years in that country and frequently moved down the valley of the Columbia on both sides of the river as far as Fishing Falls. Below this point they never descended in any numbers. About the year 1834 or 1835 they began to diminish very rapidly and continued to decrease until 1838 or 1840, when, with the country we have just described, they entirely abandoned the waters of the Pacific north of Lewis' Fork of the Columbia. At that time the Flathead Indians were in the habit of finding their buffaloes on the heads of Salmon River and other streams of the Columbia, but now they never meet with them farther west than the three forks of the Missouri, or the plains of the Yellowstone River. . . . At any time between the years 1834 and 1836 a traveler might start from any given point, south or north in the Rocky Mountain range, journeying by the most direct route to the Missouri River, and during the whole distance his road would be always among large bands of buffaloes which would never be out of his view until he arrived almost in sight of the abodes of civilization."

At three o'clock the next morning Basil, with a few others, was sent back with a cart to get the boat and returned in the afternoon, bringing with him

some meat which the Indians said was bear. They descended the river for a distance of three miles when they entered a low, marshy region evidently bordering on the lake where multitudes of wild fowl filled the air "with a noise like distant thunder." That night they enjoyed a delicious supper of goose, duck, and plover. The next morning Carson rode into camp, carrying some flour and other provisions, altogether a light but acceptable supply. The emigrants arriving at Fort Hall had depleted the stock of provisions, which were now very small. Carson reported that Fitzpatrick had not yet arrived at the fort.

The party now directed its course toward a mountain some twelve miles distant where Frémont hoped to gain a fine view of the lake, but the deepening mud as they advanced forced them to return to the river and the higher ground at the foot of the eastern mountains. They continued their way along the base of the range over a well-beaten trail, apparently the shore of the lake in the spring. On reaching Webber's Fork, where the trail entered a deep gorge, they turned toward the lake, camping on this river. Early in the morning they again set out for the particular butte toward which they had been traveling, crossing a creek with miry banks. At length they ascended to the summit of the little peak and beheld the object of their search—Great Salt Lake, lying in solitary grandeur.

"I am doubtful," writes Frémont, "if the followers of Balboa felt more enthusiasm when from the heights of the Andes they saw for the first time the great Western Ocean."

In his presidential campaign it is said the above statement was used to show that he compared himself to Balboa.

For some time the men stood and gazed at the waters of the lake, for it had in it something of the sublime. There were several islands to be seen, though whether or not these were wooded could not be determined. While they were looking a storm burst upon the lake, entirely hiding the islands from view. Preparatory to a trip on this body of water the Lieutenant found a suitable camp ground and built a corral for the horses and a small fort for the men who were to remain. They were in the region over which the Utes roamed and no telling when this tribe would make them trouble. Because of the scarcity of provisions Frémont sent several of his men to Fort Hall under command of François Lajeunesse. While it was only a four days' journey, the men lost their way, reaching the fort a week late.

For the voyage on the lake the Lieutenant selected Carson, Preuss, Bernier, and Basil Lajeunesse. As his boat was hastily constructed a great deal of insecurity was felt. According to Frémont it was to be the first boat expedition ever attempted on this interior sea, but it is said that four of Ashley's men circumnavigated the lake as early as the spring of 1826. On leaving the river the boat was dragged for a mile or so over the soft mud in which the men sank to their knees. A small black ridge on the bottom showed the dividing line between the fresh and the salt water, and after crossing this they found themselves afloat on the inland sea. They felt very



MONTEREY IN 1846
From an old print.



CALIFORNIA'S FIRST CAPITOL BUILDING
(Restored), Monterey, California.

safe so long as they could touch bottom with their paddles, but when they thought of the frailty of their craft with its "gum cloth distended with air and with pasted seams" the trip seemed in the nature of a ticklish experiment. One of the islands closest to shore was selected as the first to explore and they headed in its direction. There was a considerable sea running and the spray that came over the side of the boat was transformed into a crust of salt in a few moments. By constant use of the bellows to keep their craft inflated they made the distance to the island in a reasonably short time. As they neared the shore the water became transparent and was a beautiful bright green in color. A broad beach with a few big rocks made an easy landing place. On examining a curious brown formation along the bluff that rose from the shore they found it to be composed for a depth of some eight inches of the skins of worms, which had been washed up by the waves. These worms are a product of the salt lakes and are used for food by the Diggers.

The party climbed to the summit of the island, which was eight hundred feet in height, and from which they got a magnificent view of the lake, but even with the aid of a glass they were unable to trace the shore line. Frémont passed a very interesting night on the island and took observations for latitude and longitude. The return trip to the mainland was made in the face of a strong wind which delayed them for several hours. Those in camp had become worried and fired a shot from the howitzer to welcome them back. The Lieutenant had a great desire to extend his explorations of the lake, but on

account of the lack of food supplies he was forced to continue his journey. Preuss and Basil set off on foot for the camp nine miles distant to bring back horses for the boat and baggage. They returned late in the afternoon and the wind had increased to a raging gale.

Continuing his journey the Lieutenant encountered an occasional band of Snake River Indians, from whom he obtained service berries and various edible roots, the only thing, he observes, that distinguished them from the natives being a cup of good coffee. The weather at this time was very raw, a cold wind blowing constantly, and they were obliged to rely on sage brush for fuel for their camp fires. They followed the same route up Bear River that had brought them to the lake and on the 13th of September they camped on this stream south of the canyon called "The Gates." The day following the men seemed very much dejected, the food being low, and Frémont gave them permission to kill a fat young horse purchased from the Indians, though neither he nor Preuss would eat of the meat, as to slaughter a horse seemed to them nothing less than murder. All the time they were anticipating the arrival of Fitzpatrick from Fort Hall. A gun was fired at evening to let him know of their whereabouts, but he made no appearance. The next day they met an Indian on horseback who had killed an antelope which the Lieutenant bought with a little powder and some balls.

On the 15th, while camped on the left bank of the Roseaux, or Malade, Tabeau arrived with the news that Fitzpatrick was in camp near by and that

he had a fine stock of provisions, including butter, which was regarded as a great treat. It was a night of excitement and feasting following a time of hunger and hardship. In the morning they again followed up the valley for a time when they entered a long ravine leading to a pass in the mountains and on to Snake River, or rather to one of its tributaries called the Pannack. Their way was impeded by a luxurious growth of sage brush after leaving the waters of the Bear, this valley being described as containing excellent soil, sufficient timber and well adapted to the "grains and grasses suited to such an elevated region."

The day following they reached the plains of the Columbia, which were covered with sage brush as far as the eye could see and which won for this region the name of sage desert. From here the Three Buttes were visible, to which Frémont refers as "the little mountains." Following up the valley of the Snake River, keeping to the east bank, they crossed the Portneuf River and the white walls of Fort Hall came into view. Here Talbot and the others, who had preceded Fitzpatrick, were in camp near the post, and here Frémont purchased a few horses and five oxen, all in good condition. There was a sharp change in the weather, a sudden drop in temperature that brought snow and ice. As winter was approaching the Lieutenant decided to send back some of his men who were not entirely satisfied. Calling them together he explained that it was his determination to continue throughout the next few months and that he anticipated even greater hardships than they had so far encountered. It was then that

eleven of the men chose to return, including his "favorite," Basil Lajeunesse, who, on account of his family, could go no farther. Frémont very much regretted this as Basil was regarded as almost invaluable.

Fort Hall was built in 1834, being the first of the Hudson Bay Company's forts, and was one of the important stopping places along the Oregon Trail. In his report to the government Frémont suggested that a military post be established here to protect the emigrants from the warring redman.

On September 22nd the Lieutenant bade adieu to his late voyageurs and departed from Fort Hall, following down the Snake River Valley, reaching on the second day the American Falls, the first of three beautiful cataracts, the others being Salmon, or Fishing Falls, and Shoshone Falls, the latter of exceeding beauty. The road along the river bluffs was very rough, and when Frémont discovered a trail leading south up Fall Creek over which wagons had passed he followed it and found that it was the route taken by the party he met just outside Kansas City at Elm Grove, and which was led by Mr. Chiles. A portion of the party had gone another and a more southern route under the guidance of Joseph Walker.

The road which the Lieutenant now traveled led over a broken, dreary country, covered with sage brush and full of bowlders and gullies, which worked a hardship on the animals as well as on the men. The extensive fields of sage brush gave to the whole country a forlorn aspect. It is pictured as a "melancholy and strange looking region—one of

fracture and violence and fire." On October 1st the party camped near several lodges of the Snake Indians, who appeared more jovial than others of their race. Here they killed an ox they had brought along which proved something of a pleasant surprise on being found fat, when he had all the appearance of an ill-fed animal. They also purchased some dried salmon from the Indians, who subsist chiefly on this fish, and who seem to care less for beads and red paint than their brothers of the Midwest plains, preferring useful articles. The Oregon Trail brought them to a ford of the Snake River in a couple of days where they had some difficulty, the mules drawing the howitzer being swept down stream by the swift current. They were saved from drowning by cutting the harness. Frémont then brought his rubber boat into requisition and the baggage was transported across; in fact, everything, including the rescued howitzer. The animals were forced to swim.

In a few days the character of the country was considerably altered. Much granite appeared and the sage brush vanished. There were plants of various hues and some green grass. On the 8th the party came to Fort Boise, where they were hospitably received by Mr. Payette, who was in charge of the fort—the property of the Hudson Bay Company. The main building was constructed of logs and contained a dining-room and kitchen, while near by were the store and several sleeping apartments. Mr. Payette was especially kind to Frémont and his men, presenting them with some fresh butter and other luxuries. Their attention was attracted to a number

of miserable, half-naked Indians hanging around the fort. Mr. Payette said they were extremely improvident, making no preparation whatever in the way of food for the winter time. They were all right in the summer when the fish were to be had, but laid by no supply for the remainder of the year, consequently they were reduced at times to absolute starvation, resorting in some instances to cannibalism. They were on the same level with dumb animals, eating everything that crawled or hopped no matter how repulsive.

The party crossed the Snake River on October 11th and meeting with two Irishmen, who had lost their horses and were returning to the fort, supplied them with food and went on to the Malheur River, where they arrived about sunset. They next crossed Birch River and descended to the Snake, which was their last camp on this stream. The horses strayed away during the night, possibly in search of grass, and all but two of them were found. About nine o'clock an Indian song was heard and three men of the Cayuse tribe appeared with the two animals. They belonged to a large band that had been buffalo hunting in the Rocky Mountains and were returning home in advance. Frémont presented them with tobacco and other presents for their kindness, and they traveled for some time in his company.

"We were now about to leave the valley of the great southern branch of the Columbia River," writes the Lieutenant, "to which the absence of timber and the scarcity of water gives the appearance of a desert, to enter a mountainous region

where the soil is good and in which the face of the country is covered with nutritious grasses and dense forest land embracing many varieties of trees, peculiar to the country, and in which the timber exhibits a luxuriance of growth unknown to the Eastern part of the continent and to Europe. This mountainous region connects itself in the southward and westward with the elevated country belonging to the Cascade or California range; and, as will be remarked in the course of the narrative, forms the eastern limit of the fertile and timbered lands along the desert and mountainous region included in the Great Basin—a term which I apply to the intermediate region between the Rocky Mountains and the next range, containing many lakes with their own system of rivers and creeks—of which the Great Salt Lake is the principal and which have no connection with the ocean or the great rivers that flow into it. The Great Basin is yet to be adequately explored."

They now entered a mountainous section where grass was found in abundance and the forests were dense and heavy. They left the Snake River behind and wound their way among the mountain canyons, following a road that sometimes dwindled to a mere trail. Their progress, though slow, was pleasant as compared with the sage desert with its miles of waterless levels. Wagons frequently overturned because of the steep grades and the wonder was, considering the rough and rugged way, that they managed to get through at all. Following along the Powder River for some distance they came to the Grand Ronde, a mountain valley or great circle.

It is about twenty miles in diameter and is surrounded by high and well-wooded mountains. The party went into camp on one of the branches of the Grand Ronde River and in two days of travel were at the foot of the Blue Mountains, which derive their name from the dark blue of the pines that cover them. The altitude of this range is said to be eight thousand six hundred and fifty feet above the sea. The ascent of this range was made through a pine forest of "large and stately trees." Night overtook the party while on the way up and they were obliged to choose a camping place where there was no water. However, Preuss and Carson volunteered to go in search of water and taking the rubber bucket, struck off in the darkness, and after half an hour, during which they scrambled into a deep ravine and back again, coffee was made and the men felt greatly refreshed.

After a few days of hard travel they came to the western slope of the Blue Mountains, "long spurs of which, very precipitous on either side, extended down to the valley, the waters of the mountains roaring between them." On the night of October 22nd they camped in a meadow in view of the great Nez Percé prairie below. Crossing the head of the Umatilla River they made their way to the Walla Walla. Preuss had gone in advance of the others and did not come into camp that night, but joined them farther down the river the next day. They obtained a fine view of Mount Hood, which was a hundred miles away and lifted its snowy summit high above the surrounding country. Their course was directed down the Walla

Walla, and they shortly arrived at the mission of Doctor Marcus Whitman, which consisted of one adobe building. Unfortunately Doctor Whitman was absent, having been called to The Dalles, but there were a number of men and women about, who, for lack of flour, fed the party on potatoes. The reader will probably recall the "Whitman tradition" in which it is claimed that the noted missionary once made a famous ride to Washington for the purpose of "saving Oregon." But the facts go to prove that this claim to his having saved Oregon was not advanced until some twenty-one years after the ride occurred. An outbreak of smallpox among the Indians was laid to the missionaries, and about three years after Frémont's visit the Cayuses murdered Doctor and Mrs. Whitman and several others at the mission.

A large encampment of Nez Percé Indians gave to the place a populous appearance, and there were also a number of emigrants resting here. On the 26th of October they arrived at Nez Percé Fort, a Hudson Bay post, where the Walla Walla empties into the Columbia and near to the present town of Wallula. Mr. McKinlay, the commander of the fort, extended to the party a warm welcome, inviting them to dinner. Here the Lieutenant met a number of emigrants, among them Mr. Applegate, afterward a prominent citizen of Southern Oregon, who was building a number of boats in which to transport people down the Columbia.

The end of October found the party traveling down the south bank of the Columbia with Mount Hood and Mount St. Helens always in their range

of vision. The Columbia had now reached a width of nearly seventeen hundred feet and rolled along between sheer, picturesque bluffs. Once they were forced to make a detour on account of the high banks and forded the John Day River, so named after a member of the Hunt expedition of 1811. They crossed the Fall, or Deschutes River, at the regular ford and found the water far too deep for the howitzer. The Indians met with appeared quite friendly, but with Indians one never knows. These natives were "disagreeably dirty in their habits" as compared with those of the plains. Frémont was particularly struck by their slovenly appearance and the general dirt and squalor of their habitations.

An interesting feature of the day of November 4th was the arrival of the party at The Dalles. Here the waters of the Columbia pass through a deep gorge, the walls being about twenty-five feet in height and the river some fifty yards in width. Applegate attempted to run his boats through this narrow passage, but one of them was capsized and two of his children were drowned. There was quite a settlement at The Dalles—a mission and several buildings, together with a number of acres of cultivated land. At the Methodist Mission, four miles below The Dalles, a large canoe was purchased from the Indians, Frémont having decided to make the journey to Vancouver by water. He sent back word to Fitzpatrick to leave the carts at Whitman's and with the packs to meet him at The Dalles, whence he would start for home. Carson was to remain at The Dalles to superintend the making of pack saddles, while the Lieutenant took with him Preuss,

Bernier, and Dodson. The trip down to Vancouver was for the purpose of uniting his survey with that of Captain Wilkes.

The canoe was manned by three Indians, and most of the journey was made at night because of the strong winds that prevail during the day. Where the Columbia passes through the Coast Range there is a succession of rapids called the Cascades, where navigation is impossible, and where a portage was made with the assistance of other Indians. Emigrant camps were seen along the river banks from time to time—parties waiting for friends from above or for provisions from Vancouver. Once there was heard the merry song of a sawmill as it floated in from the wooded shores, and it recalled pleasant memories. At such a time and in such a region the song of a sawmill is as divine music to the ear.

It was near midnight when the party arrived at Fort Vancouver. The following morning Frémont called on the officer in charge, Doctor McLoughlin, who was also director-in-chief of all the Hudson Bay Company posts west of the Rockies. It was Doctor McLoughlin who objected to certain methods of this company as they affected American interests, and had trouble with them, afterward resigning his position to become a citizen of the United States. Frémont purchased supplies on government orders, and Doctor McLoughlin arranged for their transportation to The Dalles. The manager of Fort Vancouver was a sympathetic, broad-minded man, who was most kind to all of the emigrants, and who was violently opposed to trading

whisky to the Indians. The fort was thoroughly supplied with everything that heart could wish, even to an apothecary shop. The buildings were roomy, covering about four acres, and the only arms in evidence were two old cannon. In connection with the fort was a farm where all kinds of fruits and vegetables were raised, while a sawmill turned out three thousand feet of lumber a day. The various implements used by the trappers were manufactured at the fort.

After spending two days here the Lieutenant was ready to return to The Dalles, though he was desirous of continuing down the river to the ocean. His intention was now to return home by way of Klamath Lake and to explore the Great Basin between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. Moreover, he was anxious to discover the whereabouts of the Buenaventura River which Doctor McLoughlin believed in, a conjectural map of which he showed to Frémont. He could have gone on to Bent's Fort over the Oregon Trail, but the thought of the Buenaventura was uppermost in his mind. His return to The Dalles was not so pleasant as the trip down to Vancouver, for it began to rain, which made canoe riding very disagreeable. At the portages the party had a laborious time with their various craft and here they met a number of emigrants, some of whom were almost destitute, the children without shoes or sufficient clothing.

At this time two of the great mountain peaks of the Northwest were in action—Mount St. Helens and Mount Rainier. The previous year the former peak had scattered its ashes over The Dalles fifty

miles distant. It has been many years since any show of volcanic action has been observed among these mountains, though at times clouds of steam issue from the crater on the summit of Rainier, but aside from this these peaks have remained singularly quiet.

On arriving at The Dalles Frémont found that Carson had moved the camp a little nearer to the hills where the grass was better. He found everything in good order and was especially pleased to find a roast of California beef awaiting him. The camp was busy with preparations for the home journey, "though homeward, contemplated a new route and a great circuit to the south and southeast." Says Frémont:

"Three principal objects were indicated by reports, or by maps, as being on this route; the character or existence of which I wished to ascertain and which I assumed as landmarks or leading points on the projected line of return. The first of these points was the Klamath Lake on the table-land between the head of Fall River, which comes to the Columbia, and the Sacramento, which goes to the Bay of San Francisco, and from which lake a river of the same name makes its way westwardly direct to the ocean. . . . From this lake our course was intended to be southeast to a reported lake called Mary's, at some days' journey in the Big Basin; and thence, still on southeast, to the reported Buena-ventura River, which has had a place in so many maps and countenanced the belief of the existence of a great river flowing from the Rocky Mountains to the bay of San Francisco. From the Buenaven-

tura the next point was intended to be in that section of the Rocky Mountains which includes the heads of the Arkansas River and of the opposite waters of the California Gulf, and thence down the Arkansas to Bent's Fort and home."

We now see the Lieutenant's contemplated line of travel and will also see why he deviated from this route on account of unforeseen circumstances. He provided his party with provisions enough to last three months and obtained from the mission some California cattle which were to be driven along. In all he had one hundred and four mules and horses with which to begin the journey. There were twenty men of various nationalities, most of them being under twenty-one years, just the age to enjoy an exploring trip and to endure the severest privations and hardships. As guides to Klamath Lake two Indians were engaged and a Siwash boy of nineteen, who expressed a desire to "see the whites," was taken along with the promise that he should be returned to his friends of the Columbia. The wagon in which the instruments had been carried was presented to the mission, the howitzer being the only wheeled vehicle to provide vexation for the men of the expedition.

The start was made on November 25th and there was snow in the air, also on the ground. As they passed out of the river valley they found grass in abundance and they made camp on a branch of the stream they had followed, now called Eight Mile Creek. Two Indians, accompanying the party for a time, were caught stealing and were tied with ropes and laid before the fire, which seemed to prove

effective punishment. In the morning they had a fine view of St. Helens and Rainier, the latter "leading the eye far up into the sky." It seems unfortunate at this time that Frémont should have concluded his observations with a survey of the Columbia region when there were so many points of interest in the then unexplored country bordering on Puget Sound. Mount Rainier, which he saw at a considerable distance, and which is the king of northwest peaks, would have thrilled him with its beauty and majesty. We can think of no more beautiful sight than this mountain at sunset when its mantle of snow is rose-colored in the light of the dying sun, or when just before daybreak its mighty bulk stands sharply etched against the broad, gold gates of dawn.

The mornings grew colder as they resumed their journey; the streams were frozen over and they had to cut holes in the ice for the animals to drink. However, he found the country far more interesting than that along the Snake or Columbia River. To the right of them were the mountains always in view with the snow peaks rising from the pine-clad ridges like giant sentinels. Their trail led through a region of mountain and plain, where rivers and creeks were numerous and meadows alternated with forests of pine, and where the song of waterfalls filled the air with music. The beauty of the scenery was most impressive and from an elevated plain Frémont could see six mountain peaks towering up into the sky. Little did he think that one day this land of supreme beauty would become the playground of the Northwest, a country to lure vaca-

tionists from all parts of the world. The poetry in his nature responded to these scenes of exquisite and magnificent beauty, every new turn of the trail revealing to him some soul inspiring glimpse of nature's grandeur.

On December 1st, while fording a stream, one of the mules fell and gave his pack a thorough soaking, thus turning the sugar it contained into syrup. That night they camped near a family of Nez Percés, who had a handsome horse which Frémont tried to purchase by trading them a cow, but the Indians were too fond of the horse to make the exchange.

On the 7th they left the last branch of the Deschutes, or Fall River, and continued along the Indian trail, "a little east of south and constantly through pine forests." At times they found the grass to be scarce, while the soil lacked fertility. After traversing this heavily wooded country for several days the party came at length to a big marsh covered with grass and rushes which the Indians claimed was Klamath Lake. The Lieutenant's guides should have known better. This was Klamath Marsh, the lake being some thirty miles farther south. As there was no water to be seen, how Frémont could have believed this marsh to be Klamath Lake is incomprehensible. But he seems to have taken it for granted and asked no questions, nor attempted to make any further explorations to satisfy himself as to the reliability of his guides. However, he exercised extreme caution as the Klamaths were known to be hostile and possessed remarkable courage and daring. He could see smoke rising from the middle



COMMODORE ROBERT FIELD STOCKTON

In command of the U. S. S. *Congress* during the conquest of California. Military Governor of California, July 19, 1846, to January 19, 1847.

of this marsh land and ordered the howitzer to be fired, which amazed the guides, and the report of which caused the smoke to vanish. The party camped on a pine-covered point, which ran out into the marsh, and which afforded security for the horses and at the same time gave the men an excellent view of their surroundings.

As the Indians in the lowlands made no appearance, Frémont determined to pay them a visit with a guide to take the lead, and mounting their horses the party went forth. When within half a mile of the village they could see the huts of the Indians and, also, observed two of the tribe advancing to meet them. The two proved to be the chief, a man of prepossessing appearance, and his squaw, who had come out to meet their fate together. The Lieutenant remarked the singularly soft and agreeable voice of the chief and his handsome features.

The houses of these Indians were near the bank of the river, "large round huts, perhaps twenty feet in diameter, with rounded tops on which was the door by which they descended into the interior." Their chief weapon was the bow and arrow, which is very effective at a distance not exceeding one hundred yards. These Indians were apparently living on dried fish, scores of which were suspended on strings about the huts. They wore shoes made from rushes, and had mats of the same material, several of which were purchased to put under blankets in snowy weather, or use as tablecloths should occasion require. Frémont bought a puppy to add to his collection of animals, which he named Klamath. He mentions that the language spoken by this tribe

differs from that of the Shoshone or the Columbia River Indians. They gave him to understand they were at war with the Modocs, who lived to the south of them, yet strange to say the Modocs were nearest of kin to the Klamaths and spoke nearly the same tongue. However, the former possessed a more determined spirit and were great warriors. None of the men of the party were able to understand the Klamaths and conversed with them by signs, so the Lieutenant was not able to gain any information from them in regard to the region he was about to enter. All he could do was to rely upon the maps in his possession, and, as events proved, these maps were made by some one with an overwrought imagination.

In order to recruit his horses he remained here for a day where the grass was so luxurious and the water excellent. He then took an eastward course "across the intervening desert to the banks of the Buenaventura, where in the softer climate of a more southern latitude" they would be sheltered from the rigors of winter. He had counted on the Buena-ventura as an excellent place for a military fort in case of trouble with Mexico. He had many pleasant dreams of seeing this mythical river, which tradition had painted in such glowing colors. The guides that had conducted them thus far were now returning to their homes on the Columbia and it was impossible for Frémont to get any others in their stead. The chief of the Klamaths to whom he applied pleaded the lack of horses, sickness in his family, snow in the mountains, and a dozen other excuses for not furnishing a guide for the party, so

it was here that the Lieutenant became in reality "the pathfinder."

The morning he prepared to leave the camp was crowded with Indians and he was constantly on his guard, knowing them to be treacherous and having in mind the experience of Jedediah Smith in the same locality, when some fifteen of his party lost their lives at the hands of these aborigines. Snow was falling when the expedition left Klamath Marsh and headed east. The thermometer stood at zero the next morning and after following up a hollow formed by an affluent of the lake they entered a pine forest on the mountain, where the snow was from four to twelve inches in depth, and where the way was obstructed by fallen trees. It was laborious traveling at best, particularly with a howitzer to drag along with the aid of mules, which animals certainly deserve sympathy. In the midst of the forest they heard sounds as of horses' hoofs and in a few moments the chief of the Klamaths and several others of the tribe rode up and offered to pilot the party for a day or so. The chief in thinking it over decided that it was quite inhospitable to allow strangers to depart without accompanying them at least for some distance.

Continuing in an easterly direction for several hours they came to a broad stream and on the advice of their guides camped for the night. The stream was "tributary to the lake and headwater of the Klamath." On December 14th the caravan went on for seven hours, finding the snow rather deep and increasing in depth every minute. That evening the Indians, becoming thoroughly chilled, an-

nounced their intention of returning. The party had now arrived at another stream and the Klamaths drew a map on the ground indicating the direction in which this stream flowed and where it became a great river. Judging by their description Frémont concluded it must be the headwater of the Sacramento, but in this he was mistaken.

In the morning his guides were given presents and departed, while he continued on his northeasterly course, crossing the stream and a grass-covered plain, once more entering the big timber and climbing upward in the snow. For hours they labored on the mountainside and at length camped in an open space among the trees where there was a little bunch grass for the animals. Here a cow that had been driven along was killed to allay the hunger of the men and was found to be rather tough. The next day brought severe hardships. The snow was three feet deep and the crusts cut the feet and legs of the animals as they walked. They toiled up the mountains through the falling snow which weighed down the pine boughs above them and caused a profound silence throughout the vast motionless wood, which was solemnly beautiful and impressive. Winter in the forest changes its entire aspect, the "careless carpentry of snow" giving to objects a most fantastic appearance, the trees wearing hoods and gowns of strange design and everything assuming a ghostly look and seeming decidedly unreal. Toward noon the woods became more open and suddenly they reached a place where no more trees could be seen ahead. The Lieutenant soon found himself on the brink of a vertical and rocky wall

of the mountain from which eminence he could see, a thousand feet below, a green prairie and an alluring lake about twenty miles in length. Its shores were bordered with grass and clumps of willows. At that moment the sun broke through the clouds, illuminating the landscape below, while around them a storm raged with unabated fury. The sight of the glorious sunshine heartened the members of the party and they made the woods ring with their shouts of delight. Standing in the deep snow and facing a cold north wind the names of Winter Ridge and Summer Lake suggested themselves to Frémont and as such they appear on the maps of today. As viewed from the elevation on which they stood the country to the east had the appearance of a desert being rocky and covered with sage brush. It was the beginning of the Great Basin where water was not to be found. It was bounded on the east by the Bear River range and on the west by the Sierra Nevada. Some months before Frémont had touched its eastern edge at Great Salt Lake.

In descending from this mountain wall it was found not to be an easy matter, the party traveling along the verge of the precipice for four or five miles in a northerly direction before they could find a place to make the descent, and then only with the utmost difficulty. One of the mules took a tumble, turning over several times, but did no damage to himself, though the same could not be said of his pack. The howitzer was left midway on the mountain until the next morning. It was unfortunate that it was not left indefinitely. About noon they broke camp on the western side of the lake and took

up an Indian trail along its borders. While a creek here and there afforded them good drinking water, much of it was very poor, having a fetid, salty taste.

On the 20th they came to the south end of another lake which the Lieutenant named Lake Abert in honor of the chief of the Topographical Corps. This body of water was about twenty miles long and was found to be salty. The party really suffered for a few swallows of good pure water. Holes were dug near the shore in the hope of getting some, but a poor quality was all that could be obtained. That night they went to bed supperless, and after a two-hour march the day following came to a pure, cold spring near the lake, where there was also a sprinkling of rather coarse grass, which the hungry animals ate with avidity. There were flocks of ducks on the lake and the tracks of Indians were seen on the shore where the grass had recently been burned by their fires. Frémont remained here a day to give the animals a rest and the next morning he left this "forbidding lake" and bore off to the south across a plain covered with an extensive growth of sage brush. Coming to a smaller lake on December 24th he went into camp, where on Christmas morning he was awakened by the shots of pistols and rifles and a few from the howitzer in celebration of the day. Here the party enjoyed something of a feast, having a small portion of brandy and some coffee with sugar, which was regarded as a special favor. Resuming the journey on Christmas Day, the Lieutenant attempted an excursion to the east, but finding such a course impossible, took a south-

erly route, once more getting into rank fields of sage brush. Indian tracks around their camp and a horse that was missing in the morning let them know they were followed, though the marauders kept strictly out of sight. For several days they passed over a wild and desolate region, at times finding good camping spots with plenty of water and again, as they ascended the foothills to a higher elevation, patches of snow and colder weather.

On one occasion they were surprised to find in the sage brush two huts to which they were attracted by the smoke rising from them, and which seemed to have just been deserted. A sage fire was burning in the middle of one and a few baskets of straw were lying about. On looking around the men saw several Indians on the crest of some high rocks near by and others climbing up. Carson and Godey rode toward them, but they scampered off as fast as they could. Then it was discovered that a squaw with two children had dropped behind a clump of brush near the huts, Carson almost riding over her. She was so frightened she screamed lustily and closed her eyes to blot out the vision of the white men. She was brought to the camp, where presents were given her and finally she became calm enough to enter into conversation with the men. She belonged to the Snake tribe and spoke their language.

"Herding together among the bushes and crouching almost naked over a little sage brush fire," says Frémont, "using their instinct only to procure food, these may be considered among human beings the nearest approach to the mere animal creation. We

have reason to believe that these had never before seen the face of a white man.”

The country continued broken and uninviting with occasional patches of bunch grass and groves of willows. For a time they followed a small creek, which was thought to lead to Mary's Lake. It was a pleasant little valley through which they traveled and which gave promise of a better country ahead, but their hopes were dashed when they found that it opened into another desolate desert basin where water was obtained only by cutting ice in a stream on which they camped on New Year's Eve, 1843.

Frémont was somewhat discouraged. The whole region presented an inhospitable aspect. What water there was the men could scarcely drink. The horses' feet were cut by the sharp rocks and a number of them were so lame they could hardly walk. It was gullies and sand hills, fields of sage brush, deep ravines, rocky ridges, low lying swales, salt lakes and creeks with nauseating water, pinnacles of volcanic rock, miles of waterless plains—in fact, a region to discourage the most determined explorer. Some of the mules gave out entirely, and a horse that had come all the way from the “States” was left behind. New Year's Day found the party filled with gloomy forebodings as to the future. They struggled on down a valley with a black ridge on the left and a higher one on the right, tramping through fine, powdery sand covered with a saline efflorescence, with faces set toward a black ledge at the foot of which steam indicated the presence of hot springs. The hills had a burnt appearance as though

they had been heated in a blacksmith's forge. They camped without water or grass in sage brush covered with snow and for several days marched on through a fog unable to see over a hundred yards ahead. On January 3rd the men sent out to round up the horses became bewildered and were lost for a time, delaying the party from starting on their customary hour. Frémont was evidently worried over the situation. He writes as follows:

"We had reached and run over the position where according to the best maps in my possession we should have found Mary's Lake or river. We were evidently on the edge of the desert which had been reported to us, and the appearance of the country was so forbidding that I was afraid to enter it and determined to bear away to the southward, keeping close along the mountains in the full expectation of reaching the Buenaventura River."

The Lieutenant now ordered all his men to walk, he himself setting the example. This was done to lighten the burdens of the weary animals and thus he continued on his way through the dense fog. One morning a mule came into camp and died as it lay down beside the fire. The condition of the animals caused the greatest anxiety. Taplin, one of the best of the men, climbed a mountain near by and discovered that the sun was shining brightly, while the plain below was completely obscured by fog. Frémont and Preuss also ascended the mountain as they wished to gain some knowledge of their surroundings. In the meantime Fitzpatrick was to explore in the vicinity of the camp. The fog beginning to disappear, the Lieutenant saw a column of steam

rising about sixteen miles to the west and toward this the men made their way through mud and sand. It was found that the largest hot spring had a circumference of several hundred feet with a space at one end of about fifteen feet in diameter where the water boiled up intermittently with a great sound. Some grass grew in the neighborhood of the springs and the place offered a distinct relief from the dreary waste over which they had just passed.

Since leaving The Dalles Frémont had lost fifteen of his animals and with this in view he learned that he must proceed with caution. Accordingly he decided to explore the country twenty miles ahead and to move camp whenever a suitable place was found. Accompanied by Carson and Godey he went in advance, leaving Preuss to do some sketching and Fitzpatrick to hunt for grass in the proximity of camp. The Lieutenant and his two companions followed an Indian trail that skirted Mud Lake, where at the lower end they found a grassy hollow and left a signal for the party following to make camp at this place. They then continued up the hollow and after a climb of several miles were astonished when they looked down and beheld, some two thousand feet below, a vast expanse of green water, about twenty miles wide, which broke upon their eyes "like an ocean." The waves were curling in the breeze and the explorers were charmed as they looked upon the water dancing in the sunlight. Frémont thought at first that he had found Mary's Lake, but its description did not coincide with this lake so he "concluded it must be some unknown body of water, which it afterward proved

to be." The day following, the whole party camped here. The lake was a favorite place of the Indians. The water, though slightly salty, was still very palatable. The next day they pursued their way along the east shore of the lake, following a well-beaten trail which skirted the base of the mountains and, at times, was so very narrow that the howitzer could not pass owing to a storm on the lake which caused the waves to break five or six feet high along the strip of beach where the trail led. The howitzer was left behind temporarily until the storm subsided. After traveling nine miles more they camped opposite to a huge rock rising out of the water to a height of six hundred feet and which they had observed for many miles. It so reminded the Lieutenant of the Pyramid of Cheops that he named the body of water Pyramid Lake, a name it retains to the present hour. Maps of today show it to be in Western Nevada. Its elevation, as determined by Frémont, is eight thousand four hundred and ninety feet. It is seven hundred feet higher than Great Salt Lake. Here the last of their cattle were killed and were found to be in good condition, considering the scarcity of food for several weeks past. Some Indians put in an appearance who were scantily clad, one of them wearing only a tunic of rabbit skins. They spoke a dialect of the Snake tongue and informed Frémont that there was a river at the end of the lake and that they lived in the rocks near by. The men were unable to understand whether the river ran into the lake or out of it and "there still remained a chance that this might be Mary's Lake." It may be said that the river was the Truckee.

Taking the Indian for a guide they arrived in the afternoon at a large grove of cottonwood, where they met four other aborigines and had an explanatory conversation in signs. They moved on toward the Indian village together and discovered the inlet of a large fresh water stream, being now satisfied that the lake was not Mary's or the waters of the Sacramento, but a large interior lake that had been found, about thirty-five miles in length. Of the Indians they purchased some salmon trout, a welcome addition to their food supply. These fish were from two to three feet in length and of a superior quality. The party reveled in them much to the delight of the Indians, who brought into camp a great number; in fact, more than could be used. The Indians soon crowded into camp, all armed with bows and arrows, and after some unsatisfactory demonstrations they were told they would not be allowed to come armed. A strict watch was kept of the horses and a third of the men were on guard at night. They were not to be caught napping. From these Indians Frémont got a little information in regard to the country. The river on which they camped was said to come from another lake three or four days' travel to the southwest, beyond which were two rivers where white men lived. He tried without success to engage some of them as guides, but they only "looked at each other and laughed."

On January 16th the party continued along the stream which the Lieutenant called the Salmon Trout River, but which is now known as the Truckee. Cottonwoods were numerous, and the Sierra, snow-crowned, loomed over them to the

right. In eighteen miles they camped on the river, not very far from where the town of Reno now stands. Every hour Frémont expected to come upon the renowned Buenaventura, which loomed large in his imagination. On each stream they came to Carson looked for beaver cuttings which he "maintained they should find only on waters that ran to the Pacific." In about twenty miles they reached another river of good size flowing from the mountains to the west. It contained no beaver cuttings, however, so this could not be the river which was the object of their search. This stream is now called Carson River, and the day following they traversed its banks for several hours "hoping it would prove a branch of the Buenaventura." A short period of reconnaissance developed nothing new, and in making an examination of the horses and mules and finding that many of them were lame and footsore, Frémont concluded that it would be futile to attempt an eastward march toward the Rockies.

After much deliberation he gave up the idea of continuing farther in the Great Basin in his hunt for the mystical river and instead to cross the Sierra to the Sacramento Valley, wherever a pass through the mountains could be found. Of course he had not entirely given up the idea of finding the Buenaventura. It was still uppermost in his mind, and no doubt both Carson and Godey believed in its existence. To cross the Sierra Nevada in winter was a most serious undertaking. Perhaps it would have been wiser to wait on the Truckee until spring where there was fish a-plenty, and where the animals would have enjoyed the best of feed. To re-

main here would seem the practical thing to do, but the Lieutenant decided otherwise. What impelled him to fare forth in the face of a seeming impassable barrier in the snows and storms of winter cannot be explained, though it was doubtless due to a nervous energy, a desire to struggle with the elements and to triumph over them. Regardless of what his reason for attempting the journey may have been, he set his face resolutely toward the Sierra, which was one of the most daring acts in the courageous career of John Charles Frémont.

CHAPTER V

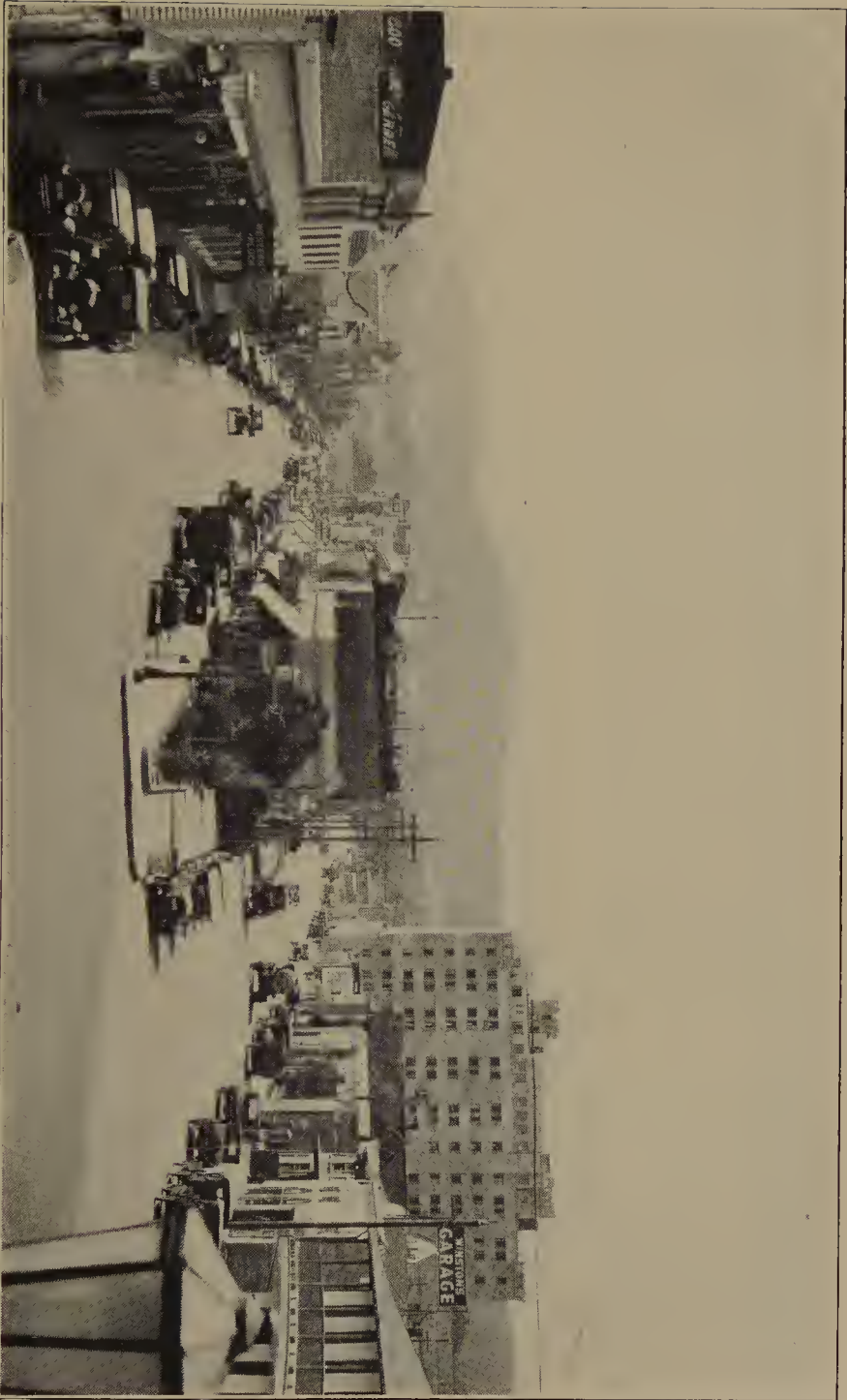
Across the Sierra Nevada in Midwinter

While occasional trappers had been in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Lieutenant was the first man of science to cross them and to give to the world authentic information regarding the region. These peaks rise to an average height of ten thousand feet and at that time formed for hundreds of miles a snowy barrier against emigration from the East. The passes in the mountains were few—in fact, it was an unknown and unexplored land—and to discover a practical route across them was probably the chief aim of Frémont, aside from learning conditions over the range in California, where citizens of the United States were not supposed to go, and to ascertain the attitude of the Mexicans toward the Americans—in all, to find out innumerable things for the elucidation of the coterie in Washington.

Once again Frémont became “The Pathfinder,” for he undertook to travel through a country no white man had ever before visited, at least that portion of it lying directly east from Sacramento. No one up to that time had ever crossed the Sierra in midwinter, which was looked upon as an almost impossible task. Nothing, however, was impossible to the Lieutenant and the probability of being overtaken by a terrific snowstorm apparently never occurred to him, so he set out to conquer the sublime heights to the west, to pursue his solitary way

among the lonely canyons and mountain walls robed in their garment of spotless white, where there was no sound to break the heavy silence save the soft whisper of the falling flakes of snow.

They left their camp on the Carson River on January 19th, and going up this stream, crossed a little mountain by a circuitous route, camping on the same river at an elevation of over four thousand feet. They then followed up the Carson and camped "close to the mountains" where the snow was covered with the tracks of Indians. The next day they traveled in a southerly direction over a tolerably level country and encamped on another large stream known as Walker River in the maps of today. After a jaunt of fourteen miles they came to the mountains where one branch of the river "issued in the southwest," while the other flowed from the southeast along their base; here camp was made and Frémont climbed a near-by range and saw a circular valley beyond. The Indian trail over which he had been traveling led directly to a gorge on the farther side of the valley, at the base of the main mountain which rose abruptly. The gorge was evidently a pass, but as the snow was falling heavily he decided not to risk it, but to go south, camping near the forks of the river. On January 23rd he continued to travel southeast over a good road, arriving at another stream—the East Walker River—which he thought might be a branch of the Buenaventura, but was disappointed in finding it "an inland water." It was now clear to him that since leaving Summer Lake he had been flanking the great range that divided the Great Basin from the waters of the



MONTREY IN 1927

Contrast this picture with the print made in 1846.

Pacific and that the lakes and rivers he had encountered were the drainage from that range. This was one important fact that he had learned.

Previous to breaking camp the morning of January 24th an aged Indian came running up with a bagful of pine nuts to sell. None of the men could understand his language. He spoke in the Washoe tongue, which is not a dialect but the language of the Washoe tribe, inhabitants of Nevada. By means of signs Frémont engaged the Indian to lead him to a pass which he knew and before the agreement was terminated several other Washoes came into camp. Accompanied by the newcomers the party started up a creek, and after following a rocky trail over a broken country, passed through a snowy gap north of Lake Mono. From here they descended into a wide valley where they spent the night. In the morning, which was sunny and beautiful, twelve Washoes put in an appearance, each carrying a bag of pine nuts.

“Whenever we met these Indians,” remarks Frémont, “their friendly salutation consisted in offering a few nuts to eat and to trade; their only arms were bows with flint-pointed arrows.”

The pacific conduct of the party quieted any alarm the Washoes may have felt and the presents given to them inspired their confidence. The Indian guides wore out their moccasins and one of them was put on a horse. He had never been horseback before and created much amusement for all concerned. In coming to a pass in the foothills the snow was much deeper and the Indians refused to go any farther. Whether it was because of fear of the

higher mountains ahead or of some other tribe with whom they were at war the Lieutenant was unable to ascertain. Anyway he was left to find his own way through the untracked mountain fastnesses. They descended into a valley, not reaching the bottom until dark. The day had been warm enough to melt the snow and in consequence their moccasins were wet and as night came on froze stiff on their feet. A good fire of willows soon dried them out. To add to the comfort they felt, seated by the glowing flames, Frémont passed out a little brandy he had been preserving with great care and which, fortunately, he had obtained without a doctor's prescription. Preuss asked whether or not the "famed nectar possessed so exquisite a flavor." Here they remained for a day for the purpose of reconnoitering and from a high ridge they saw an open country, which was "supposed to form the valley of the Buenaventura," but in reality they were looking at a section lying northwest of Mono Lake, which has the general appearance of a valley.

With Carson, the Lieutenant traveled up a branch of Buckeye Creek for twelve miles and at the beginning of a valley they selected a camping spot. The day following Carson was left to move the camp to this place, while Fitzpatrick went with Frémont to a "narrow strip of prairie about fifty yards wide between walls of granite." This is no doubt the place now known as the "Devil's Gate." The Lieutenant supposed this to be the point in which were gathered the mountains between the "two great rivers and from which the waters flowed off to the bay." It is evident that he had the San

Joaquin and Sacramento in mind by his reference to "two great rivers."

They reached camp after dark and the next day the entire caravan followed, passing Devil's Gate, and, after twelve miles, camped on a high point near the West Walker River. Once more the howitzer was left behind with the hope of rescuing it later. The following few days were marked by hard going, and it was during this period of ascending and descending the steep mountain slopes that the howitzer was finally left to rust out in the wilds of the Sierra. Says Frémont:

"The principal stream still running through an impracticable canyon, we ascended a very steep hill, which proved afterward the last and fatal obstacle to our little howitzer, which was finally abandoned at this place."

In this connection it may be said that the giving up of this gun entailed no hardship on the men or caused any copious flow of tears, though Frémont, no doubt, felt bad. Some Indians were induced to come into camp and from them it was found that they had yet to cross the mountains, that they had been traveling thus far along the foothills. The Lieutenant promised the Indians many presents if they would guide him over the range. Looking at him intently they raised their hands high above their heads to show him the impossibility of traveling through the deep snow. They made signs to advise him that he must go to the south, where he would find people who lived near a pass in the great mountains. They said one day's journey would bring him to this place, and they agreed to furnish a guide.

The food supply was now running low. They were forced to rely on pine nuts to a considerable extent, though they still had some dried peas, a little flour, some coffee, and a number of pounds of sugar which was held in reserve as a "defense against starvation." The Indians told of a party of white men who had been that way two years before, probably meaning the Bartleson-Bidwell caravan, which made the journey in 1841, though Frémont concluded the Indians must have meant Chiles or Walker, the only two men known to him to have crossed the mountains from the Great Basin.

On January 30th the entire party went forward with a young Washoe to guide them. Here the river opened out into a broad valley and the traveling was very good. They made but ten miles that day and camped in the low river bottom where there was no snow, but considerable ice. Fires were made of dry willows, and they were fairly comfortable. At this point the river ran in a northeasterly direction, and ahead of them they saw a gap in the mountains. The next day after a tramp of some fourteen miles they reached this pass when it began to snow heavily. It grew intensely cold, and as night came on, the Indian, shivering from the snow which fell on his naked skin, showed some reluctance about continuing and was let to go, but he kept the pieces of blue and scarlet cloth the Lieutenant had given him tightly rolled up, not wishing to get them wet. In the afternoon they found a good camping place by a wooded stream where they saw before them "a great continuous range along which stretched the valley of the river, the lower

parts steep and dark with pines, while above it was hidden with clouds." This they felt to be the central ridge of the Sierra Nevada. They had made a forced march of twenty-six miles, and, save the animals that had been stolen, none of them had given out. In the band they now had sixty-seven mules and horses.

The camp fires were no more than lighted when a number of half-naked Washoes appeared, who had evidently been on a rabbit hunt, judging from the nets they carried with them. Frémont addressed himself to several of the more intelligent looking ones, explaining to them that he desired to cross the mountains to other white men beyond, and that he had come from a far-off country, having traveled nearly a year. One old man, acting as spokesman, informed him that it was six sleeps to the land of the whites, but that it would be impossible to go there now on account of the deep snow, strongly advising him to follow the course of the river, which would lead to a big lake where there were many fish. There he could remain till the mild weather of spring. Frémont labored under the delusion that he was still on the Truckee, while it is more than probable that he was on the East Carson. In reply he told the Indians that his men and horses were strong and that they would break a road through the snow. He spread before them all sorts of tempting trinkets, saying he would give all of them for the services of a guide. The old man said there was one among them who had been across the mountains to where the whites lived, and going out of the lodge he returned in a few moments with a very intelligent

appearing young Washoe, whom the Lieutenant prevailed upon to become his guide. He was called Melo, a word meaning friend. He was provided with skins for moccasins, a large green blanket, leggings, and other articles of clothing, including some blue and scarlet cloth in which he arrayed himself with evident satisfaction.

The party was now pressed for food, having neither grease nor tallow, and the lack of salt was a serious privation. A dog that had followed them from Bear Valley was sacrificed and served a part of the camp, while a few rabbits were bought from the Indians. The river was frozen over. Above them gleamed the icy summits of the Sierra. The men grew strangely silent. They knew they were attempting something hazardous and whether or not they would succeed remained to be seen. As the snow became deeper Frémont adopted a system of road-breaking in which the men alternated every so far. Passing two snow-covered huts in which a family of Washoes lived they camped on the bank of a creek, where, on a hillside exposed to the sun, Carson found enough grass for the animals. They were now at an elevation of six thousand seven hundred and sixty feet. They proceeded up Markleeville Creek, being forced to travel along the steep slopes and over spurs, the snowdrifts having filled all the hollows. They made only seven miles when they stopped for the night under a great cedar and sent their animals back to their previous camp to feed. The rest of the day was spent in breaking a road, and while thus employed several Indians joined them on snowshoes.

The morning of February 4th Frémont, with several men, went ahead, each leading a horse to break the road, which, in spite of their best efforts, was not always successful. Late in the day they arrived at a dividing point between two ridges and saw beyond a basin, some ten miles across, which was covered with snow. On the western side rose the middle crest of the mountain, a "dark-looking ridge of volcanic rock." The basin to which Frémont refers is where the West Carson River has its source. Toward a pass, which the guide indicated, they attempted to make their way, but after the horses had lunged and wallowed for several hundred yards through the drifts and had become utterly exhausted, they were brought to a complete standstill. The guide told Frémont they were entering the deep snow where their real difficulties were to begin. To continue seemed hopeless, but he did not despair. His will was to succeed, but the present state of affairs gave him pause. He ordered Fitzpatrick to return to the camp by the cedar tree and to have Tabeau take the horses to the camp of the previous night, while he, with some others, was to remain there. A fire was built around the trunk of a huge pine, and that night they slept on a bed of boughs. The wind blew icy cold and there was little sleep for Frémont. He says this was one of the bitterest nights of his entire journey. At this camp two Indians showed up, one an old man who began to harangue the Lieutenant about the danger of trying to cross the range in the snow, saying that if he would go back the Indians would show him a much better route. He spoke in a loud voice and there

was a singular repetition of words and phrases which made his speech rather musical. After a time the men began to understand what the aged Indian was talking about. The gist of his plea for Frémont to retrace his steps was contained in the words, "rock upon rock, rock upon rock, snow upon snow, snow upon snow," meantime making signs of precipices where the feet of the horses would slip, sending them over the precipitous cliffs to a horrible death far below. It was plain that the old man was in dead earnest. The Siwash lad from the Columbia who had "wanted to see the whites" seemed to comprehend the grave danger which threatened the party and burst into lamentations, finally covering his head with a blanket and emitting prolonged wails.

The guide had risen early and stood shivering by the fire. The Lieutenant threw a blanket over the Indian's shoulders and in a few minutes he was not to be seen. Nor was he ever again seen by any of Frémont's men. He had deserted without a word. While the men busied themselves bringing the baggage up to that point Frémont and a few others were engaged in making snowshoes and sledges. The day after they set out on a reconnoitering expedition. With Frémont were Fitzpatrick and Carson, and they crossed the basin, climbing one of the peaks on the left side of the pass. From this point they were delighted to look down into the great valley to the west. Carson, who had been in California fifteen years before, recognized the low-lying mountains beyond as the Coast Range which skirts the Pacific.

“At the distance of apparently thirty miles beyond us,” says Frémont, “were distinguished spots of prairie, and a dark line, which could be traced with the glass, was imagined to be the course of the river; but we were evidently at a great height above the valley, and between us and the plain extended miles of snow fields and broken ridges of pine-covered mountains.”

When they turned toward camp it was quite late in the day. One of the men became fatigued and his feet began to freeze. Fitzpatrick set fire to a dry cedar and remained with the man until he was entirely thawed out. The snow over which they traveled was five feet deep on the average, but in some places it was twenty. Several days were spent in getting the baggage to the pass, the men suffering from snow blindness which was relieved to some extent by wearing black silk handkerchiefs over their faces as veils. Fitzpatrick, who had charge of the animals, sent word that it was impossible to get the horses through the snow even where the men had tramped down a roadway. The poor beasts lunged about in a frantic effort to walk, but would fall, and not having strength to rise lay buried in the drifts. Sending a messenger to Frémont for instructions he was ordered to take the horses back to their old pasture and with mauls and shovels to open and beat a way through the snow, strengthening this with branches and boughs of the pine. The whole party were soon engaged in this work, and they labored constantly for two days. Such exertion increases the appetite, and when there is little or nothing to satisfy it the situation becomes criti-

cal, consequently Godey was granted permission to kill the little dog Klamath, which he prepared Indian fashion—"scorching off the hair and washing the skin with soap and snow." Shortly after this a supply of meat arrived and it is recorded that the party enjoyed an extraordinary dinner—"pea soup, mule, and dog." This stopping place was called "Long Camp," being close to Carson Pass.

On the 14th of February, in company with Preuss, Frémont climbed one of the highest peaks, either Red Lake or Stevens, one being about as high as the other. From the summit of this peak they saw below a beautiful sheet of water entirely surrounded by mountains. This he named Mountain Lake, or Lake Bonapland. Later it was called Lake Bigler. It is now known the world over as Lake Tahoe. Its altitude was estimated at six thousand two hundred and twenty-five feet. To the east as far as they could see was a great mass of broken, snowy mountains fading to blue in the distance. The Lieutenant was two hours in climbing the peak, on which were a few scattered trees, mostly cedar and aspen. The two days following he spent reconnoitering with Dodson beyond the pass where they camped on a small stream, which he felt was the one on which Captain Sutter lived in the Sacramento Valley. On reaching camp he was delighted to find that all the animals had arrived safely—fifty-seven of them—and were feeding on a grassy knoll near by.

On February 20th the party, with all the horses and mules and camp material, stood at the summit of the pass, two thousand feet higher than the South Pass of the Rockies, and by the road they had trav-

eled one thousand miles from The Dalles. It was here that the words, "Kit Carson 1844" were later found inscribed on a tree. In August, 1921, the Native Sons of California erected here a bronze tablet bearing a replica in bas-relief of a cross section of the tree showing the early trail maker's words, and beneath the following inscription:

"On this spot, which marks the summit of Kit Carson Pass, stood what was known as the Kit Carson tree on which the famous scout, Kit Carson, inscribed his name in 1844 when he guided the then Colonel John C. Frémont, head of a government exploring expedition, over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Above is a replica of the original inscription cut from the tree in 1888 and now in Sutter's Fort, Sacramento."

Frémont found the elevation to be nine thousand three hundred and thirty-eight feet above sea level, though later calculations somewhat reduced this figure. To reach this pass had been a terrific struggle and their labors were by no means at an end. Ahead of them lay a region covered with dense forests and broken by wild canyons. There were still vast snow fields to contend with, but the sight of the distant valley, through which a stream wound like a silver thread, inspired the camp with renewed courage. Leaving the pass, they followed down a ridge on either side of which were deep drifts of snow. Hearing the sound of thunder, they looked toward the far-off valley and found it enveloped with clouds where a storm was raging. When these clouds disappeared they fancied they could see the Sacramento River and the bay of San Francisco,

though they could hardly think this true, having met with so many disappointments. Once more the Buenaventura occurred to them, but this was the last time. That night they saw fires in the valley, which they concluded had been lighted in answer to theirs, but discovered in time that the fires were those of the Indians some eighty miles distant. In descending they sighted a few open spots, but to find these required unlimited patience. But they well knew that below them was a land of surpassing beauty and fertility, which they would eventually reach. Their only food now was mule meat—their one resource from starvation. However, the weather was pleasant and the sunsets, washing the western sky with gold, compensated in a measure for the hunger they may have felt. They were soon traveling over snowdrifts, the crusts of which were strong enough to bear the weight of the animals. They crossed grass-covered ridges and sometimes took to the steep slopes where they were forced to scramble for a footing. In some places they were obliged to crawl on hands and knees because of the slippery soles of their moccasins.

While making a reconnaissance with Carson the Lieutenant slipped on a rock in the river and was thrown into the icy current. Thinking his companion was hurt, Carson sprang in after him. Frémont lost his gun, but afterward found it where it had been slung under an overhanging bank. On February 24th they came to the South Fork of the American River. On this day they were gladdened by the sight of some green grass. Here the river went raging over huge boulders and tearing down the mountains in

a perfect torrent. At times they beat down the snow with mauls to make a path for the horses, and at length descended to the lower foothills, where Frémont saw for the first time California flowers in bloom. On the 26th they reached a fork of Silver Creek and killed a mule for food, the head of the animal making "passable soup." Grass was very scarce and the animals suffered. Frémont's horse, Proveau, became very weak and the condition of the stock caused alarm.

Meantime, Fitzpatrick was left to make his way down the mountains as best he could, while the Lieutenant, taking Preuss, Talbot, Carson, Dersoier, Towns, Proue, and Dodson with him, went in advance to reach Sutter's at the quickest possible moment and to return with provisions for those behind. Each hour they expected to reach the valley, but it always seemed a little farther on. Proveau, Frémont's favorite mount, wandered away, and Dersoier volunteered to get him. Towns became deranged by the privations he had endured and went swimming in the icy waters of the river. Late at night Dersoier returned, his mind also bewildered. He thought he had been gone several days. Fatigue and weakness had affected his mind.

"The times were severe," remarks Frémont, "when stout men lost their minds from extremity of suffering, when horses died and when mules and horses ready to die of starvation were killed for food. Yet there was no murmuring or hesitation."

Preuss, who had gone on ahead down the river, did not return to camp and a search was made for him. Pistols were fired, fires were lighted,

but he failed to appear. The Lieutenant, growing alarmed, followed down the river in the hope of overtaking him, but found only some tracks made by the Indians. They had now reached a country where the camping was excellent, the grass abundant, while the live oaks formed a continuous grove as the river increased in width. The evening of the third day Frémont heard a weak cry and was overjoyed to see Preuss coming toward him. He had been lost and explained the occurrence as follows:

Knowing it to be the Lieutenant's intentions to keep close to the river, he went on searching for places that afforded a good view of the country. He did not follow very near to the trail and toward evening returned to the river. Surmising that the party was behind him he went back until darkness came on, when he stopped and built a big fire in a pile of rocks. The next day was a repetition of the first, and he hastened to reach the valley, which seemed his only hope. He subsisted on the roots of a plant familiarly known as the sweet onion. While digging for these with his pocket knife he unearthed some large red ants, which served as a dessert. In the pools by the river he found some small frogs, which he ate with a relish and hunted for acorns, but found none. Once he heard what he thought was the barking of dogs, and hurrying in the direction whence the sounds came, encountered two huge timber wolves, not pleasant companions at such a time. Passing on down the river he came upon several Indians, who were generous enough to offer him a handful of roasted acorns. He gave them his pocket knife in return for the favor. They refused

to shake hands with him, not knowing this to be a custom among the whites. As he went on he found the tracks of Frémont's horses and the smoldering fire he had made. He overtook the party just at nightfall and as his strength was giving out.

Frémont continued down the river, occasionally pausing to admire the beauty around him. Their horses reveled in the long, strong grass and gained in strength until they could carry the men with perfect ease. On the 6th of March they reached the North Fork of the American River, which was at first taken to be the Sacramento. The banks of this stream were gay with flowers. The poppy's chalice was filled with the sunshine of the perfect day. These native flowers of California rioted through the meadow lands weaving a wonderful cloth of gold. To the men, fatigued and worn from the terrible trip through the snow-clad ranges, this region must have seemed a veritable paradise with its manifold enchantments. Large oaks and green, grassy spaces now greeted the eyes of the travelers. In a short time they came to an adobe house with glass windows. As there was no one at home they passed on, soon arriving at an Indian village, where the inhabitants wore cotton shirts and other garments suggestive of civilization. One of the Indians, who spoke Spanish, informed Frémont that the river down which he had journeyed was the Rio de los Americanos, or American River, and that it joined the Sacramento about ten miles below. He volunteered to take the party to Fort Sutter, three miles distant. When within a few hundred yards of the fort they were met by Captain Sutter him-

self and for the time being their troubles were over, for he entertained them in a most royal manner.

After a night's refreshing sleep the Lieutenant left early in the morning to meet Fitzpatrick and his party, carrying with him a supply of bread, salmon, and beef. On the second day he met them—"skeleton men leading skeleton horses." They were all on foot, "a more forlorn and pitiable sight than they presented cannot well be imagined." Fitzpatrick had a sad tale to tell. The melting snows had made the descent of the mountains very hazardous, a number of the horses and mules falling over the cliffs and losing their packs. Among these was a mule that fell and lost all of the plants that Frémont had collected since leaving Fort Hall. Of the sixty-seven animals with which they had started across the range, only thirty-three lived to reach the Sacramento Valley, which gives a very good idea of the hardships the party encountered. Then, too, a number of the men had become ill owing to the unwholesome food they were compelled to eat. On March 8th, 1844, Frémont and his party were once more all together encamped at the junction of the American and Sacramento rivers.

After months of travel and adventure the Lieutenant had arrived at the most important post in California—Sutter's Fort. It was located on the site afterward occupied by the city of Sacramento and was built of adobe, being about one hundred and fifty yards long and fifty in width. The outer walls were fifteen feet high and the inner ones about ten. Between the two were the stores and shops, while the master occupied a separate house within



Fremont loved the beautiful wild flowers of California and frequently wrote in his diary descriptions of scenes like the one shown in this picture. [See page 127.]

the enclosure. From the Russian Fort at Ross the Captain had obtained at a cost of some thirty thousand dollars many cattle and horses, sixteen small cannon, two bronze fieldpieces, and some ammunition.

Captain John A. Sutter was born in Baden in 1803 and came to California in 1839. He made many friends, being of an engaging personality. After a short time spent in Monterey he went up the Sacramento River and founded "New Helvetia," becoming a Mexican citizen in 1840. He was appointed an official of the Mexican government by Alvarado, the revolutionary governor. His "New Helvetia" soon expanded into an immense estate, harboring cattle, sheep, and horses by the thousand. He called himself "Governor of the Fortress of New Helvetia" and wore a sort of uniform and side arms as befitted his station. In the beginning he suffered annoyance from the Indians, but gradually commanded their respect as he did the Californians in general. The plowing, harrowing, and other work on his vast domain was performed by the natives, who were compensated by articles of clothing and blankets. He made use of the Indian boys and girls in various capacities, and during Frémont's visit they were engaged in watering the gardens, the season being unusually dry. Some forty Indians in uniform did police duty, one guarding the gate constantly in true military fashion. He employed about thirty men, Americans, Germans, and French. It was one of his men, John Marshall, who first discovered gold and who told of his find to Captain Sutter. He immediately let the world know of this,

which, unfortunately, proved his undoing. In a few years he was stripped of his possessions and died in Washington "vainly beseeching Congress for some restitution of the princely fortune filched from him by the Americans." It was well for the emigrants that there was a Sutter at the end of the long trail, and often his kindness to them was repaid by rank ingratitude. Captain Sutter, while very hospitable and generous, resented any encroachment on his estate, as shown in a letter he wrote on learning that Alvarado was to permit the Hudson Bay Company to trap along the Sacramento, and in which he declared he would make a Declaration of Independence and proclaim California a republic independent of Mexico. He denounced Castro, who, with Vallejo, had become alarmed at the number of Americans arriving in the territory via Oregon.

Frémont remained at Sutter's Fort until March 22nd, where he replenished his entire camp equipment. Horses, mules, and cattle were collected, new pack saddles were made, and a great load of provisions provided for the homeward journey. Meantime he found out all that was possible about political conditions in California and the attitude of the people toward the Mexican government. At Sutter's a number of men were released at their own request. Dersoier, who had won Frémont's high regard by his strict adherence to duty, wandered off and was not heard of again, though rumor had it that he appeared in St. Louis two years later. His blacksmith, Neal, expressed a wish to remain in California and was given work at the fort. In all

there were nineteen men engaged for the return trip, which was sufficient. When the Lieutenant bade farewell to Captain Sutter he had with him one hundred and thirty mules and horses and some thirty cattle, five of which were milch cows. An Indian boy was furnished by the master of New Helvetia to act as vaquero, as many of the animals were untamed and required almost constant attention. Frémont's first objective was Walker's Pass, about five hundred miles to the south. His route led up the San Joaquin River, but instead of Walker's Pass, he probably reached the Tehachapi instead. From there he expected to travel south until he met the Spanish Trail, running from Los Angeles to Santa Fé, and, after following this for a time, to continue to Utah Lake, thus solving the problem "of any river except the Colorado" coming from the Rockies.

Some time after he had left Sutter's an officer arrived to inquire into the business that had brought the party there. The Mexicans suspected Frémont of ulterior motives in visiting California, but he had gone into that territory without any interference on their part.

The route which he decided to pursue would carry him over a desert country on the Spanish Trail. Owing to the formation of the region to be traversed it would mean a journey of two thousand miles before reaching the Arkansas—a long and tiresome trip. He found the usual difficulties of travel reduced to a minimum in the San Joaquin Valley. The first day the party made eighteen miles, passing over a level region covered with grass, with

an occasional grove of live oaks to lend variety. There were fields of blue lupine, several feet in height, which, interspersed with the profusion of golden poppies, added to the pleasure of the travelers. They saw several bands of elk and antelope, and, riding along in the spring sunshine, felt very comfortable, indeed.

Passing the Cosumne River and crossing a branch of the Mokelumne, they came to the Calaveras River and rested beneath a tree a short distance from the site of the present city of Stockton. On reaching the Stanislaus River the Lieutenant found that the depth of the water precluded the possibility of fording the stream, so he went some five miles above, hoping to find a ford, but was disappointed. Some of the cattle were killed and the baggage was ferried across in a boat made of their skins. Here the Indian boy, who had joined them at Sutter's and who was no doubt frightened by the number of streams they had crossed separating him from his tribe, took occasion to desert. Then thirteen of the cattle decided to quit the expedition, and as they took the trail for the fort little effort was made to recapture them. On April 2nd a boat was built to carry them across the Tuolumne River, and in twenty-two miles they came to a river which the Lieutenant said had no name, but it was doubtless the Merced. It was easily crossed and they continued along the east bank of the San Joaquin, arriving at another tributary which required them to make a long detour. Bands of wild horses were numerous, particularly on the west side of the river, so for fear of losing some of his own animals he kept to the

eastern bank. The weather became rather disagreeable and on April 7th they marched in a cold rain through a dense fog, traveling by compass. The next day they arrived at the principal tributary of Tulare Lake, which he called River of the Lake. It is now known as Kings River. It was a country of marshes covered with bullrushes and crossed by numerous sloughs. Later on they reached a section suggestive of aridity, but were soon in a land of oaks and streams. Ascending a trail for a few miles in a southeasterly direction they struck a little creek that soon lost itself in the sand. That night after camp was made they were visited by a Christian Indian who spoke Spanish fluently and who persuaded Frémont to give up his idea of traveling toward Great Salt Lake, after crossing the mountains, as he would find a country utterly devoid of water and with no green thing growing for many weary miles. The Lieutenant acted on this advice. He had now learned several things, among them being that the Bay of San Francisco did not extend far into the interior, that no Buena Ventura River emptied into it as shown by the maps—in fact, that the Buena Ventura was a trapper's myth, existing only in the imagination of certain frontiersmen. He had found the only river in the West having its source in the Rockies and its termination in the Pacific to be the Columbia.

On April 12th they came to another large river, which emptied into a lake at the head of a valley, and which Frémont afterward named Kern River and Kern Lake after a member of his third expedition. On the 13th they camped near the summit of

Tehachapi Pass and on gaining the topmost ridge the following day saw a desolate landscape lying below—the Mojave Desert. Before nightfall they came to a place dotted with Yucca's, which, according to Frémont, is the "most repulsive tree in the vegetable kingdom," being associated in his mind with the barren desert and the burning sands.

The mission Indian, who had been their guide for several days, now departed southward, while the party took a hardly perceptible trail leading east. At the foot of a black butte, indicated by their recent guide, they found a stream of good water where they camped for the night. Having given most of the animals a free range they had some difficulty in getting them all together again the next morning. They were following along the edge of the desert near the southern rim of the mountains, passing over broken ground, where grass was scarce and watering places infrequent. After marching eighteen miles, on April 20th they reached the Spanish Trail and a shout of pleasure went up from the men, for here was a "road to travel on and a right course to go." In making the trip along the trail, Frémont sought the camping places of the Santa Fé travelers. Their way led along the Mojave River for some distance, or rather along the sandy bed of what was sometimes a river, according to the season of the year. A few Mojave Indians were encountered—poor and hungry as usual—and they enjoyed a great feast when the party butchered some of the cattle, which were worn out from travel.

Two Mexicans, a man and a boy, came into camp

one evening and reported that they were a part of a caravan that had left Los Angeles in advance of the others and had had a fight with the Indians, who had stolen their horses. They were Andreas Fuentes and Pablo Hernández, who, with Pablo's father and mother and Fuentes's wife and a Mexican named Giacome, had halted some eighty miles ahead at a spring called the Archilette to wait for the rest of the party. Here they were attacked by a hundred Indians, but Andreas and Pablo, driving as many horses as possible, fortunately escaped. The two Mexicans accompanied Frémont the next day, arriving at the Agua de Tomaso, where the horses had been left and from which they had been driven away by the redskins. Carson and Godey volunteered to go after them, and their exploit is one of the most thrilling in the annals in Western adventure. The two scouts followed the trail of the robbers until night came on, when they reached a mountain and entered a narrow defile into which the moon cast no light. Unable to see, they lay down without lighting a fire and slept until dawn, when they were again in pursuit. About sunrise they discovered the horses and four lodges in close proximity. They advanced cautiously and when within forty yards gave a war whoop and rushed in, not knowing how many occupants the lodges contained. A sharp battle ensued and an arrow passed through Godey's shirt collar, just grazing his neck. In a moment two of the marauders lay dead on the ground, while the others fled in terror. Carson and Godey were soon masters of the situation. They found that the Indians had prepared for a big feast,

having killed and dressed some of the best horses, no doubt expecting others to join in the festival. These aborigines, who lived in the mountains, had no use for horses except for food. The two adventurers, driving fifteen of the animals, returned to camp the afternoon of the next day. Two scalps dangled at the end of Godey's gun as proof of their success. In all they had ridden about a hundred miles and were thirty hours in the saddle. To pursue a band of Indians day and night into an unknown region and to attack them without knowing their number required men of iron nerve and sublime courage.

Frémont took part of the night for traveling because of the terrific heat of the day. The country continued bare and sandy, with few water holes and little grass. A strong hot wind began to blow, and here and there were skeletons of horses that had perished from thirst. Crossing a stretch of desert on the 29th, the most "sterile and repulsive" they had yet seen, they entered a basin and soon reached the camping ground known as the Archilette. The silence that hung over the place foreboded evil, and on riding up they discovered the corpses of Hernández and Giacome, mutilated and pierced with arrows. Everything was gone except a little dog belonging to Pablo's mother. Of the women no trace could be found, and it was evident they had been carried off captives. The little dog was frantic with joy on seeing Pablo, who cried piteously for his mother and father. The men of the party were most sympathetic when they saw the grief-stricken boy. Both Carson and Godey felt they had wreaked

vengeance upon some of the Indian tribe, at least, and this fact afforded slight consolation. This spot Frémont named Agua de Hernández, but it is now known as Resting Springs.

The landscape remained quite the same in appearance, dry and rocky, with an occasional dwarf oak, an acacia or a few cottonwoods. An ornamental plant that served to decorate an otherwise dreary looking country was the cactus which flourished in the sandy soil. The animals were limping badly from the incessant rocks, while the lack of cool water was a severe handicap. They were frequently forced to travel fifty or sixty miles without coming to a creek or a spring, suffering greatly from thirst and occasionally moistening their parched lips with the acid of the sour dock, which afforded temporary relief.

Early in May they arrived at Las Vegas, Nevada, which was near to the Great Basin and where the traveler on the Spanish Trail was always glad to get on account of the fine water and the abundance of grass. The Lieutenant found the water at Las Vegas "rather too warm to be agreeable," but it was better than none. The next day found him in a barren, waterless country, extending sixty miles to the northeast, at the termination of which was a branch of the Virgin River called the Rio de los Angeles or Muddy River. Here the party remained for a day to recuperate after their long and grueling march. In the morning the camp was crowded with Indians of the Piute tribe, said to be among the most treacherous in that part of the country. The horses were at once driven in and kept close to the camp,

the Indians meantime using very insulting terms to show their contempt for the party. These redskins were the same that had murdered the Mexicans, and their intentions toward Frémont were evidently hostile. They were nearly naked, their hair gathered into a knot behind and each was armed with bow and arrow, the latter barbed with a clear, translucent stone.

“In these Indians,” remarks the Lieutenant, “I was struck by an expression of countenance resembling that of a beast of prey—a restless motion of the eye and an action wholly by impulse.” One of them, who appeared to be chief, forced himself into camp armed, which was directly contrary to Frémont’s orders, and who began to belittle the size of the party as compared with that of the Indians. He poked fun at their firearms until Carson in exasperation said, “Don’t say that, old man—your life is in danger!” And it is probable that the chief was never before so near death as at that particular moment.

During the day the Indians roasted and ate lizards by the fires of the camp. Frémont gave a group of them a horse that had become exhausted, thereby incurring the displeasure of the others. However, he managed to pacify all of them, continuing his march through a desolate, arid region, the sole inhabitants of which seemed to be lizards and lizard eaters. After twenty miles they came to the Virgin River, the most dreary stream he ever saw, and crossing it, encamped on the east bank. For a number of days they followed up this river with a strong guard over the horses as the Indians were keeping

close behind, waiting a favorable opportunity to steal some of them. For a time all signs of the Spanish Trail vanished and men were sent out to reconnoiter. They found the trail on the opposite side of the river where there was a ford. One of the best men, Tabeau, rode back toward the camp of the previous night in search of a lame mule and failed to return. Carson, becoming alarmed, informed Frémont of Tabeau's absence, and while they were discussing the matter, smoke was seen in the distance, a sign by which the Indians are given to understand that a blow had been struck and to be on their guard. Carson with several men rode down the river, and after traveling several miles and finding nothing of the missing man or the mule, returned to camp for the night. They found, however, what they believed in the uncertain light to be a puddle of blood. The next morning Frémont, Fitzpatrick, and some others joined in the search, and going to the spot where the blood was seen they found the mule slowly dying from an arrow wound in its side, and near by the body of Tabeau, stripped of clothing and badly mutilated. This discovery cast a gloom over the party as Tabeau was among the most popular of the men and that he should meet such a terrible death filled his comrades with a fierce desire for revenge. Frémont felt that as much as he would like to avenge the death of this man, an expedition into the mountains would be quite impossible owing to the poor condition of the horses. He well knew who committed the murder, as the Indians who had previously infested his camp entirely disappeared.

They now pursued their way toward a pass in the Santa Clara Mountains, approaching it through a rocky defile. Here the country put on an altogether different aspect, which was hailed with delight by the travelers. Bunch grass was seen on the hillside, and a variety of shrubs also appeared. They found an excellent camping place on the Santa Clara, a branch of the Virgin, where the feed was good and the water cool and refreshing. They had been twenty-seven days in the desert, and while the country was yet broken the journey along the Santa Clara was much more pleasant as the landscape was less desolate.

On May 11th the party took the right hand of the Santa Clara, which led them to an "extensive mountain meadow," afterward Mountain Meadow, where the massacre of a caravan from Missouri by the Mormons occurred in 1857. In a few more days they reached the dividing ridge between the waters of the Virgin and those of the Sevier, which flows to the north, belonging to the Great Basin. They were now at the rim of the Basin, the terminating point of the desert, where on a high plateau, grass-covered, and containing many springs, they halted in order to rest the animals and give the men time for recuperation. The elevation at this place was five thousand two hundred and eighty feet, and the distance from which they first struck the Spanish Trail was about four hundred miles. The recollections of those four hundred miles were far from pleasant, as they recalled weary days of heat and thirst, of rocks and sand and of winds that scorched and seared. In addition to these discomforts there was the con-

stant danger of an attack by Indians, requiring an all-night guard and the strictest vigilance. They were now able to relax and enjoy life. Here they were joined by Joseph Walker, noted explorer and mountaineer, who had come from California with a big caravan, and noting signs along the way of a party of whites in advance, assumed they were Frémont's men and hastened ahead with eight other Americans. In the desert Walker had some of his horses wounded and had killed two Indian robbers. He was engaged by Frémont as guide, being very familiar with the country.

After a time of relaxation they again pressed forward, following a tributary of Sevier Lake, at length leaving the Spanish Trail and continuing along the base of the Wasatch Mountains, finding their own way through the wilderness. The region was fertile and there were many fine streams. They met a band of Ute Indians, the chief having taken the name of Walker. They were armed with rifles, which they knew how to handle, and were on their way to the Spanish Trail, doubtless bent on robbery. However, they conducted their thievery in a high-class manner by simply demanding toll of the traveler for passing through their country. They chose the horses that struck their fancy and took them, offering some worthless trinkets in exchange. Walker made Frémont's name known to the chief, who had heard of his previous expedition. As a token of friendship an exchange of blankets was made and the Indians passed on.

Unable to find a ford at the Sevier River, the Lieutenant constructed rafts out of bundles of

rushes and by this means transported all the baggage from one bank to the other, while the horses and mules swam. This method of transportation proves the ingenuity of mankind in such instances. Here one of the men named Badeau was accidentally killed by drawing his gun toward him by the muzzle. The hammer caught and the weapon was discharged, the bullet entering his head. He was buried on the bank of the Sevier. From this point they crossed a ridge and entered a beautiful mountain valley, directing their course toward a high snowy peak at the foot of which lay Utah Lake. Early the next morning, when Frémont was in sight of this body of water, he met some Indians who were well armed and were mounted on fine horses. Utah Lake is about fifteen miles in breadth and stretches far to the north, terminating within twenty or thirty miles of Great Salt Lake. In arriving here he had concluded a circuit of twelve degrees diameter north and south and ten degrees east and west, finding himself in May, 1844, near the same lake he left in September, 1843. So far he had been eight months in making the trip and had traveled three thousand eight hundred miles. He had found the Buenaventura to be a hoax, and was the first to examine scientifically this great stretch of country, and to give to the world an authentic report regarding it. Previous map makers showed a woeful lack of definite information.

Leaving Utah Lake on May 27th, the party went up one of its tributaries, the Spanish Fork, traveling for two days through a narrow canyon until they reached the headwaters of this stream, when they

crossed the ridge dividing the waters of the Great Basin from those of the Colorado, arriving at the source of a stream then called White River but now known as Price River. Following up one of its branches they came to a pass, the narrow trail permitting them to go only in single file. After crossing a number of swiftly flowing creeks and rivers, during which time they lost one horse, they arrived in the afternoon of June 3rd at Uinta Fort, on the principal fork of the Uinta River. They camped near the fort after experiencing some difficulty in crossing this stream. The garrison at the fort, according to Frémont, was composed of Canadians and Spaniards with the usual assemblage of Indian squaws. Some months after the Lieutenant's visit the fort was attacked by a band of Utes, the men being killed and the women made captives. Sugar and coffee were obtained at this post, also a quantity of dried meat. The party was strengthened here by the addition of a well-known hunter named Auguste Archangeau.

Frémont's next stop was made at Ashley's Fork of Green River. He found the traveling hard, but added very materially to his botanical collection. On the night of June 6th they camped high up on a mountainside and had a fine view of the Colorado, the river winding its way through a narrow canyon, which expands into a pleasant little valley several miles in length. On the 7th, after a pleasant day's journey, they arrived near evening at a steep and rocky ravine, by which they descended to "Brown's Hole," now Brown's Park. Here the Colorado was found to be very high, occasionally over-



THE OLD CUSTOM-HOUSE AT MONTEREY



SAN JOSE IN THE EARLY DAYS

The Capital City of California when Frémont was elected
United States Senator.

flowing its banks, but by repairing a skin boat bought at the fort they were able to make a crossing without much trouble.

The lower end of the valley they were in was the easternmost point of the Colorado. Near to where they camped was an abandoned fort, probably Fort Davy Crockett. From the valley the river enters a deep gorge with precipices of red rock on either side. Many of the rocky walls rose to a height of two thousand feet and the region was known by the trappers as the canyon country. Here they saw numerous bands of mountain sheep, several of which were killed by the hunters. They were now in a section where extreme vigilance was essential to their safety, as the Sioux, who ranged in the vicinity of the Colorado, were usually on the war-path. Near a branch of the river known as St. Vrain's Fork a party of hunters, of which Carson was a member, was fired upon by the Indians two years before. A man riding beside Carson received five bullets in his body. Game was plentiful, and with the fine pasturage to be found here the country was never free of roaming Indians.

Leaving St. Vrain's Fork on June 13th, they climbed a dividing ridge and about noon stood at an elevation of about eight thousand feet, the summit of the Rockies. Below them lay the valley of the Platte and in the distance the Sweetwater range. There was a region to the south of which no scientific account had been made. It was well known to hunters and trappers, but unknown to science, and it was Frémont's wish to visit it, for within a radius of a few miles was the approximation of the head-

waters of three rivers—the Platte, the Arkansas, and the Grand River Fork of the Colorado. These streams rise in three mountain coves called parks. To visit one of these would necessitate a recrossing of the range, but the Lieutenant decided to do so, nevertheless, and so he took up the Platte instead of going down it. The party found traveling a pleasure, as the country was scenically magnificent, and they were not confronted by those obstacles they had heretofore encountered.

One day they chanced upon a grizzly bear and one of the men attempted to lasso it, but after a hard chase had to give it up, the bear escaping in a thicket. As they continued up the Platte the valley narrowed until it became a gorge, and entering this they were led into another valley some thirty miles in diameter and surrounded by snow-clad mountains, the foothills of which were robed in pine. It was a grand place for the animals to feed, and they made the most of the opportunity. No buffaloes were seen, a band of Arapahoes having preceded the Frémont party. It is in this region that the Platte gathers its first waters and no river could have a more beautiful birthplace.

Exploring the waters of the park for some time the Lieutenant crossed the mountains through a pass "where a wagon could travel at ease" and was on the western side of the range in a valley then known as Old Park, where rises the Grand River, one of the principal branches of the Colorado. Here the party ran into about thirty Arapahoes, who said they had come from a village a few miles above. While the usual presents were made, the Indians

were disposed to be unfriendly and rode to their camp at top speed. Frémont scented trouble and went at once into the bottom lands of the river, where he found an open space with the water on one side and the overflowed land on the other.

They had no more than made these preparations when two hundred warriors appeared painted and armed. The Lieutenant planted the American flag in front of his men and a parley ensued, which terminated in a truce. Twenty Sioux were with the band, among whom was an old chief, who informed Frémont that before they came out the Indians had held a council of war, the majority deciding to attack, while a strong minority opposed this because they had seen the party a year previous on the plains and knew positively that the men were not giving assistance to their enemies. It appeared that these Indians suspected all traders whom they met on the western side of the mountains to be against them. Possibly some former experience had given them this erroneous impression.

The Lieutenant accompanied them to their village, where they said there was a ford where he could cross the river, but was deceived in this respect. He kept strict guard and camped with several sloughs between him and the village; but the Indians crowded into his camp and, despite all his vigilance, succeeded in stealing a number of things from his equipment. He was thankful when the time arrived to pack up and go, as in spite of their protestations of friendship these redskins were not to be trusted. They continued up the Grand River for about eight miles, when they ferried their goods

across it and at night reached the southern fork of the Grand. The hunters were kept busy, as the buffaloes roamed about in great herds. The river was soon hedged in by the pine-covered mountains, and after a ride of several hours they came into a valley where the stream forked into three branches, Frémont following up the middle one where the trail was exceptionally good. A fire was observed on the opposite side of the valley soon after they had camped and was immediately extinguished the moment their own was lighted. The next morning they found the fire to have been that of six trappers, who had ventured into the mountains after beaver. Two of their number had met death at the hands of the Indians—one recently killed by the Arapahoes. As they wished to join Frémont, his hunters returned with them to their encampment, while he went on up the valley, the trappers catching up with him later in the day.

After a climb of several hours through a pine forest the party reached the top of the dividing ridge at an elevation of eleven thousand two hundred feet. The river at this point had spread itself out into various branches, having its source nearly on the summit of the ridge. Below they saw a valley green with verdure—South Park. Descending to a small creek they camped for the night, the waters of the stream being the remotest head of the South Fork of the Platte. In the afternoon of the next day Frémont saw a mounted party coming down the mountainside whom he took to be Arapahoes. He made a stop on one of the willow-covered islands of the river, getting in as favorable a position

as possible in case of hostilities. The cavalcade proved to be a party of Ute women, who told the Lieutenant that their men were engaged in a battle with the Arapahoes on the farther side of the ridge. Their cries and lamentations gave evidence that some of the Utes had been killed. They said that about daylight the Arapahoes charged into their village, in which there were three hundred warriors, and made off with some horses, after killing the chief and three others. The Utes went in pursuit, and the battle followed with its termination in doubt. The weeping squaws implored Frémont to go to the aid of their men, but such a thing was impossible as in a fight between two Indian tribes the whites could take no sides. Nevertheless it was quite exciting to feel that within a few hundred yards a battle was taking place involving five hundred combatants. The sharp crack of rifles was clearly audible, and as the party passed along the ridge numerous horsemen were active in rescuing the wounded and bringing in the dead.

On putting some fifteen miles between himself and the belligerents, Frémont went into camp in a strongly fortified position among the pines. Late the next day he saw Pike's Peak and felt that he was approaching civilization. On June 24th, 1844, he bade good-by to the river and traveling southeast through a mountainous region for several days came to the eastern base of the range, arriving in a short time at Pueblo, where he met some old friends. They reached Bent's Fort on July 1st, where the party was enthusiastically received. Walker and Carson remained at the fort now that the danger of travel had

been eliminated, while the Lieutenant pursued his homeward way down the Arkansas "along a broad wagon road." The river gradually widened as he went on, and one night, after a spectacular display of thunder and lightning, the rain fell so heavily as to cause a sudden rise of the water, which overflowed the banks and, sweeping into camp, covered much of the baggage. The perishable collections he had made were almost ruined, the labor of weary months destroyed.

On the 6th he left the Arkansas, crossing in a northeasterly direction, and on the 9th camped on the Smoky Hill Fork. Following down this stream he reached a Pawnee village. He had no hesitancy in meeting these Indians, as they received a regular annuity from the government, but was treated in a very unfriendly, not to say insolent, manner. He distributed the remaining part of his goods among them, which in no way satisfied their greed, and after considerable difficulty in getting away, camped fifteen miles further on. In a report to the War Department from Major Wharton, made some time afterward, it was learned that the Pawnees had fully decided to attack Frémont the night following his arrival, but some dissension arose among them which prevented it.

Except for the accidental shooting of one of the men, Alexis Ayot, by which he lost the use of a leg, nothing occurred to mar the trip to the "little town of Kansas on the banks of the Missouri." They had been gone fourteen months and during this time there was not a serious case of sickness among them, which proves that despite hunger and hardship, a

life in the open is surely conducive to good health. On August 6th the Lieutenant arrived in St. Louis, where his party disbanded. Mrs. Frémont was awaiting his return with anxiety, not having heard from him since he left the lower Columbia the previous November. The young Siwash boy, who had managed to stay the trip out, accompanied him to Washington, where he was sent to school and "saw much of the whites." Later the Indian Department sent him to Philadelphia, where he learned to read and write and to speak English with some fluency. The Lieutenant's saddle horse, Sacramento, a beautiful animal, noted for his courage and agility, was sent to Kentucky, where the "blue grass grows." The horse was a gift from Captain Sutter and was prized very highly. He lived to carry his master through some tight places in the years that followed. Thus his second expedition was concluded, terminating one of the longest and most thorough explorations in the history of America, and one which proves for all time the bravery and determination of Frémont.

CHAPTER VI

The Third Expedition

In Washington the Lieutenant found that numerous changes had taken place in his absence. Both Mr. Nicollet and Mr. Hassler had died, as had also Mr. Benton's colleague, Senator Linn of Missouri. This was regarded as unfortunate for Oregon, as he was an avowed champion of the Northwest Territory at a time when they were decidedly few. Frémont, no longer on the trail, now enjoyed the comforts of home life, and to add to his pleasure, his mother came on from the South and remained with him until the winter set in.

The making up of the maps was left to Preuss, who was comfortably situated in a home of his own where he could look over the river and smoke his pipe in peace. The Lieutenant had for his assistant John C. Hubbard, and the two of them spent each day in computing the various calculations. A humorous incident occurred in this connection, which goes to show that the zeal of scientists may sometimes lead to unexpected consequences. To find whether or not a sextant was accurate by measuring it against other observations they went to a church near by where there was a large stone—a carriage step—on which to set the horizon. In waiting for the stars to come into position, Frémont rested himself on the ground, leaning against the stone. In a few days a deacon of the church called on Senator Benton to inform him that he had seen his son-in-

law lying in front of the house of worship for several nights in a beastly state of intoxication and refusing the aid of an apparently sober companion. In a heated manner Mr. Benton explained the matter to the confusion of the meddlesome deacon.

In preparing the report of his journey, Mrs. Frémont worked with her husband, taking keen interest in the task. She was made to realize some of the many dangers that lie in wait for the traveler in the wilderness of the Far West. The completed report, which was given to Congress on March 1st, 1845, and which was responsible for the occupation by the Mormons of the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847, created a sensation. The report of the first expedition was combined with it, and Congress ordered ten thousand copies to be printed. At home and abroad it was eagerly seized upon by publishers, and some of these editions ran into the thousands, far exceeding that printed by the government. The newspapers of the country contained full accounts of the Lieutenant's achievement, and from everywhere came words of praise for the daring explorer. He was, indeed, the man of the hour as he deserved to be. Through the recommendation of General Winfield Scott, at that time head of the army, President Tyler appointed him Captain by brevet "to rank as such from the 31st day of July, 1844, for gallant and meritorious services in two expeditions commanded by himself; the first to the Rocky Mountains, which terminated October 17th, 1842, and the second beyond those mountains, which terminated July 31st, 1844."

Accompanied by Senator Benton, the Captain

called upon the newly elected chief executive, President Polk, and during the course of the conversation mentioned that he had recently examined a map in the Library of Congress which gave Great Salt Lake as being connected by three rivers with the Pacific Ocean. At first the President seemed skeptical about the accuracy of Frémont's information and was not at all sure but that the rivers were where the map showed them to be.

Frémont had returned to Washington filled with a sense of California's unsurpassed climate and its wonderful beauty and fertility. It was like an enchanted land, the lure of which was irresistible. Stretching for nearly eight hundred miles along the Pacific it lay practically unused, waiting for settlers and the commerce of the world. It was an ideal place for a home, and the Captain determined to find one there in that sunset land. On his return, and after the publication of his report, California became of as much interest among the officials in Washington as did Oregon. The day the report was handed in, Congress admitted Texas into the Union, which action, according to Mexican declarations, was the signal for war. While war did not begin immediately, the existing condition could not continue for long. Daniel Webster was against the annexation of Texas and any trouble with Mexico, but he had a friendly feeling for San Francisco Bay, holding that it would be "twenty times as valuable to the United States as all of Texas." Webster invited Frémont to dine with him in order to discuss California, which he called "a sandy strip of land along the Pacific, with here and there an oasis of

fertile soil, offering no inducement for settlers except the fine harbors indented upon its coast." Mr. Webster was also sure that "England will never permit Mexico to cede California or any part of it to us." Frémont does not say whether or not their dinner conversation in any way changed Webster's point of view, but we venture to say it gave him something to think about.

President Polk was determined to acquire California in an honorable and just manner, believing, with George Bancroft, that Mexico could not long hold that territory under existing conditions. There were a number of high officials, including Bancroft, Buchanan, and Senator Dix, a member of the Senate military committee, who conferred with Senator Benton. The question of acquiring California was the chief subject of discussion, and Frémont was always present. Valuable information regarding Mexican affairs was given them by Baron Gerolt, the Prussian Minister, who had been Minister to Mexico for twenty years. It was the Baron who received positive information from the City of Mexico that orders had been sent by the Mexican government to the commanding general of the territory of California "to drive Frémont from any part of that territory in which he might appear." There were rumors of war in the air and knowledge of great activity among Mexican troops, with a general movement toward the Rio Grande. This information was conveyed to Secretary Buchanan by the Prussian Minister.

After the report of the second expedition had been made, a third was in contemplation. It was

decided that this should be directed to that section of the Rocky Mountains which gives rise to the Arkansas, Rio Grande, and Colorado rivers. The Captain was to complete his examination of Great Salt Lake and vicinity and to make a survey of the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada, "so as to ascertain the lines of communication through the mountains to the ocean in that latitude." Of course the eventualities of war were taken into consideration as the greater part of the work was to be conducted on Mexican soil. At that time the United States laid claim to less than one-half of the territory west of the Mississippi, while Great Britain was trying to retain a hold on Oregon, and had California in mind as a possible possession. Mexico would undoubtedly favor English protection for California in case she should get into war with the United States. That California would eventually fall to us or England seemed a certainty, and the coterie surrounding Senator Benton was determined that it should be ours. All the probabilities and possibilities were carefully discussed pending the third expedition, and the part Frémont was to play was well understood. No definite instructions were given him; he must act according to circumstances, using his own discretion. Concerning this he says:

"My private instructions were, if needed, to foil England by carrying the war now imminent with Mexico into the territory of California."

Although he did not carry a howitzer along, it would have been far more appropriate in this expedition than in the former one, for it was not to be made entirely in the interest of science. The aims

and intentions of the government were clear in Frémont's mind.

In leaving for his third expedition he was accompanied from Washington by Dodson and the Siwash boy, who was anxious to return to his home in Oregon. Mrs. Frémont, who had planned to go to St. Louis with the Captain, remained at home on account of her mother's illness. Edward M. Kern of Philadelphia went as topographer, Preuss preferring to stay in his comfortable home by the Potomac. There were sufficient funds provided for the expedition, and in view of the uncertainty of conditions the force was much larger than before. Naturally a topographical party entering territory belonging to another nation should be amply large and be well armed. The Captain bought a dozen rifles, which he was to give as prizes to the best marksmen in his party, all of which was a great acquisition to topographical work, marksmanship being an essential qualification. The fine horse, Sacramento, was brought to him from the grass fields of Kentucky. In St. Louis a number of his old men joined him, including Godey, Walker, Basil Lajeunesse, Theodore Talbot, and Lieutenants Abert and Peck of the Topographical Corps. From the Delaware Indians he chose twelve men, among them two chiefs, Swanok and Sagundai. These Indians were known to be excellent hunters. Another member was James McDowell, a nephew of Mrs. Frémont.

But few days were given to St. Louis, as it was getting late in the season and he was anxious to be on the way. No time was spent on the prairie, as that was not an object for examination. His real interest

lay beyond the Rockies, beyond the Sierra Nevada, in that beautiful land of fruits and flowers glorified by the setting sun. His heart was in California, where he planned a permanent home, and where in life's decline he might sit beneath his own vine and fig tree and drink in the beauty that unfolded itself to his eyes.

On reaching Bent's Fort the final preparations for the journey were made. Here a detached party was formed, commanded by Lieutenant Abert, with Fitzpatrick as guide, which was to make a survey of the country to the south, "embracing the Canadian and other waters." This party was not to remain out during the winter. A note was sent to Kit Carson, who, with his friend Richard Owens, was establishing a stock farm on a tributary of the Arkansas River. Carson did not hesitate to join Frémont and sold everything he had, coming on to Bent's Fort at once and bringing Owens with him.

"I received them both with great satisfaction," writes the Captain. "That Owens was a good man, it is enough to say that he and Carson were friends. Cool, brave, and of good judgment, a good hunter and a good shot, experienced in mountain life, he was an acquisition, and proved valuable throughout the campaign. Godey had proved himself during the preceding journey, which had brought out his distinguishing qualities of resolute and aggressive courage. . . . The three, under Napoleon, might have become Marshals, chosen as he chose men. Carson, of great courage, quick and complete perception, taking in at a glance the advantages as well as the chance for defeat; Godey, insensible to

danger, of perfect coolness and stubborn resolution; Owens, equal in courage to the others and in coolness equal to Godey."

On the 16th of August Frémont left Bent's with sixty "self-reliant men, equal to any emergency liable to occur and willing to meet it." Here, indeed, was a topographical party capable of doing any amount of scientific work, especially on Mexican soil. In the trio above mentioned the name of Kit Carson stands out today in bold relief against the background of Western exploration and adventure. He became a famous figure in the West and will be remembered by the many landmarks that bear his name.

With an expedition so thoroughly armed and equipped, the Captain had no fear of molestation from any source, and set his face resolutely to the West, not realizing, perhaps, the important part he was destined to play in the conquest of California.

Following up the Arkansas to the Great Canyon, or Royal Gorge, the party left the river for a time, passing over a "bench of the mountain" and arriving September 3rd at the headwaters of the Arkansas on Mexican territory. Here a herd of buffaloes was seen and several of the animals were killed for meat. Reaching Piney River, they continued to the Grand, thence to the White and on to Green River, crossing at the mouth of the Uinta. They arrived at Utah Lake October 10th, camping on the shore, and on the 13th reached Great Salt Lake, in which region two weeks were passed in observing the general topography of the country and fixing various points of interest. In company with Carson the

Captain visited an island in the lake where he killed a number of antelope. On returning to camp he found an old Ute Indian awaiting him, who demanded payment for the antelope, declaring that all the animals on the island belonged to him. He reproached the Captain bitterly for the wrong done him; so to pacify the alleged owner of wild antelope he was given a number of presents, including a knife and some tobacco. He was perfectly satisfied with the outcome of his ruse and departed in high glee.

To the west there were only mountains covered with snow, and some time was spent in deciding the course to pursue. Near the far edge of the desert was the peak of a mountain some sixty miles distant. To reach this required a journey over an arid plain where the Indians said there was not a drop of water to be found. They tried to discourage Frémont from attempting to cross it, which feat they claimed had never been accomplished. Apparently none of the men were acquainted with the region, yet Walker, who was his guide, is said to have made a trip in 1833 to the head of the Humboldt, and afterward to have been lost in this very desert. At any rate Frémont could learn nothing of the country, so he decided to find out about it for himself. As the distant peak was in his intended line of travel he engaged an Indian to guide him, meantime arranging with Carson and Archambeau to take a pack mule, some provisions and water and set out for the mountain in the night—he to follow the next day—making a dry camp on the plain. The advance party was to make a signal by smoke in case water



JOHN DRAKE SLOAT

Commodore United States Navy and governor of California. Born at Sloatbury, New York, July 26, 1781; died at New Brighton, New York, November 28, 1867; came to California in command of the Pacific squadron, arriving at Monterey, July 2, 1846, in the *Savannah* (flagship), the *Cyane* and *Levant* having preceded him, and the *Portsmouth* was at San Francisco. He landed 250 men July 7th, raised the American flag and issued a proclamation assuming command of California.

was discovered. The Captain left in the afternoon and found the desert, save for an occasional bunch of sage brush, to be as "bare and smooth as if water had been standing upon it." Night came on and with it that sense of loneliness and awe the desert inspires. The stars bloomed out and seemed very near, while the travelers were engulfed in a vast solitude with no sound to break the awful stillness. The Indian guide became terrified; his knees shook under him, and he "wobbled about like a drunken man." He was not a Ute, but a high-class Digger, and finding him absolutely useless, he was given his reward and set free. Camp was made some time before daylight and fires of sage brush were lighted to signal the Carson party.

In the early morning Archambeau rode in with the news they had found water and grass at the foot of the mountain, with wood in abundance. Starting out at once they reached the place toward which their course was directed late in the afternoon. To the friendly mountain Frémont gave the name of Pilot's Peak. Later this peak marked the short cut to California known as "Hasting's cut-off." In order to permit the animals to rest after the arduous desert trip they remained here a day. On November 1st they resumed their journey through the ridges of the basin and camped at a spring, which, according to the Captain's calculations, was not far from the present town of Shafter, Nevada.

On account of the approaching winter with its inevitable fall of snow in the Sierra, no time was wasted in examination of the Great Basin. The main object was to reach California without delay.

On the 8th they camped on a small stream, which Frémont called Crane's Branch after one of his Delawares. This stream, together with another, formed a river which was given the name Humboldt.

"I am given by myself," says Frémont, "the honor of being the first to place his great name on the map of this continent."

Here the Captain divided his party, giving Kern charge of the main body with instructions to follow down and survey the Humboldt and its valley to their termination in what was called "the sink." He was then to continue along the eastern slope of the Sierra to a lake, which Frémont named after Walker, who was to be the guide of the party. The two expeditions were to meet at the lake, which was near to the Captain's trail of 1844. Their route lay along the river all the way, where there would be plenty of feed for the animals. Frémont took ten men with him, among whom were several Delawares. He struck out in a westerly direction, crossing the ridges and ravines of a not wholly inviting region. Once while traveling along the base of a mountain he saw a light smoke arising from a ravine, and approaching the spot quietly, discovered a lone Indian standing before a sage brush fire cooking some squirrels in an earthen pot. He had not heard the party, and knowing that escape was impossible, tried to appear pleased, but his convulsive start and the wild look in his eyes showed that he thought his end had come. It probably would had the Delawares been alone. He offered them some of his squirrels, but the proffered gift was declined

and the men moved on. They had gone but a short distance when Frémont discovered that his Delawares had taken the Indian's bow and arrows, and he made them return these immediately.

Another night, while they were camped by a spring on a mountainside, enjoying their pipes, Carson gave a quick exclamation and leaped to his feet, pointing toward some object in the light of the camp fire. An old Indian woman, "wrinkled and brown as a bag of leather," with skinny hands shading her eyes, stood looking at them—a weird picture in the flickering light and one which gave the famous scout a start when he first saw her. She was nearly naked and her gray hair hung in a mat over her bare shoulders. She had mistaken the camp for that of her own people, and when she saw the faces of the white men she was stricken dumb with fear. Instantly she turned to run, but the men seized her and brought her within the range of the fire. After a few moments she was able to talk and gave them to understand that her people had turned her out to die on account of her old age. She was very hungry and was given a piece of an antelope that Carson had killed. No sooner had the meat been placed in her hands than she slipped away in the darkness like a wild animal. The next morning her tracks were found at the little spring near by where she had been during the night. She was one of the earth's unfortunates—too old to work and turned out to die.

The country hereabout had a special interest for Frémont, and he lingered for two successive days making observations. He then went on toward

Walker's Lake, where he was to meet the rest of his party. On the way he met a dozen or more Indians, who passed him by in single file without looking up or saying a word. He thought this a strange proceeding and could account for it only on the ground that they either regarded the whites as intruders, or had suffered some wrong at the hands of other travelers and held it against white men in general.

"In this region," says Frémont, "the condition of the Indian is nearly akin to that of the lower animals. Here they are really *wild men*. In his wild state the Indian lives to get food. This is his business. The superfluous part of his life, that portion that can be otherwise employed, is devoted to some kind of warfare. From this lowest condition, where he is found as the simplest element of existence, up to the highest in which he is found on this continent it is the same thing. In the Great Basin, where nearly naked he traveled on foot and lived in the sage brush, I found him in the most elementary form; the men living alone, the women living alone, but all after food. . . . And the same on the mountains and prairies, where the wild Indians were found in their highest condition, where they had horses and lived in lodges. The labor of their lives was to get something to eat. The occupation of the women was in gleaning from the earth everything of vegetable or insect life; the occupation of the men was to kill every animal they could for food and every man of every other tribe for pleasure. And in every attempt to civilize, these are the two lines on which he is to be met."

On the 24th of November Frémont was joined

on the lake by the other members of his party. Having in mind the trip of the previous year across the snows of the Sierra, where the animals met with so much suffering, he decided again to divide the caravan, sending Kern with the main division southward and around the lower point of the Sierra to the San Joaquin Valley. Walker was to be the guide and the two parties were to meet "at a little lake in the valley of a river called the Lake Fork." Choosing fifteen of his best men he set out to cross the mountains before the snow fell. He was soon on familiar ground near to his trail of the previous year, and on December 1st came to the stream he called the Salmon Trout River, now the Truckee. His route led up this river for some distance, when he seems to have crossed to another stream, now known as Cold Creek, where he camped in the neighborhood of Donner Lake. Before sunrise the next morning the party climbed the "rocky ridge which faces the eastern side" and were soon on the crest of the divide over seven thousand feet. Frémont mentions the emigrant road passing this point which follows down a fork of the Bear River, ultimately coming out in the Sacramento Valley. So far they had been favored by good weather, which was very fortunate. But little snow was seen from the pass, and this was on the summits of the higher peaks. As the emigrant road was quite rough the Captain turned to the south, camping in a mountain meadow where the grass was fresh and green. He was now entering that section of California where the vegetation was wonderful, where, should snow fall, he could easily make his way to the valley. The

route led through a great pine forest, where the trees stood so close together as to make a soft twilight underneath. As they descended the mountains the landscape changed in appearance. There was much oak, the acorns of which furnished the principal food of the Indians. The acorns of the white oak are sometimes two inches in length and in taste strongly resemble Italian chestnuts. The number of these trees, with a green undergrowth of grass, gave to the country the aspect of a huge cultivated park.

On the 8th they were at an elevation of only five hundred feet and camped on a stream which was named Hamilton Creek. He found numerous Indian villages through the oak belt and observed many holes in large granite bowlders used as mortars in which to grind the acorns. Because of the beauty of the country, the abundance of game and the luxurious grass Frémont was tempted to make early camp and consequently they were four days in reaching the valley. December 9th they arrived at Grimes's ranch on the American River near Sutter's Fort. Says Frémont:

"Captain Sutter received me with the same friendly hospitality which had been so delightful to us the year before. I found that our previous visit had created some excitement among the Mexican authorities. But to their inquiries he had explained that I had been engaged in a geographical survey of the interior and had been driven to force my way through the snow of the mountains simply to obtain a refuge and food where I knew it could be had at his place, which was by common report known to me."

In his series of articles published in the *Century Magazine* John Bidwell says that the "first notice of Frémont's return to California was his sudden appearance, with Kit Carson, at the Fort." It seems that Bidwell was in charge of the fort and he told the Captain what he could and could not furnish him with in the way of mules and provisions and, "saying something in a low tone to Kit Carson, Frémont rose and left without saying good day." Bidwell also says he called on the Captain, who "stated in a very formal manner that he was the officer of one government and Sutter the officer of another; that difficulties existed between these governments and hence his inference that I, representing Sutter, was not willing to accommodate him." However, Frémont writes that "being ourselves already recruited by the easy descent into the valley I did not need to delay long here. A few days sufficed to purchase some animals and a small drove of cattle, with other needed supplies." So it is evident that Frémont did get accommodations at Sutter's after all, Bidwell to the contrary notwithstanding.

On the 14th he left New Helvetia to meet the rest of his party at the place designated. His route south was practically the same as that of the previous year, involving no particular hardships and free from exciting incidents save what promised to be a lively fight with Horsethief Indians. Owens, Maxwell, and two Delawares were in advance when they came suddenly upon an Indian village. There was firing and a great commotion heard by Frémont, and hastening forward he found his men on a small hill among the rocks with a hundred Indians

surrounding them all yelling like demons. The men had dismounted in order to fight more effectively, so their horses were in danger of being captured. As one of the savages ran to get them he was stopped quickly by a bullet from Owens's gun. The Indians then drew back toward their village and the Captain took advantage of their retreat with an occasional shot to let them know he was very much alive. Later they followed, and hiding behind rocks and trees called the men all the names not to be found in the Spanish dictionary, telling them that there was a big village in the mountains, that they had sent for their chief, and when he arrived they intended to make a killing. Frémont posted guards around camp that night and before daylight he heard the Indian women and children going toward the mountains. There was no further disturbance, but once in the night a Delaware fired at a wolf that jumped over a log.

The Horsethief Indians were formerly connected with the missions. When these were broken up by Mexico they took to the mountains, preying upon the various ranchos and driving off the horses, which they killed for food. Being familiar with the country and all the settlements because of their association with the missions, these Indians were far more daring and dangerous than those who had fixed habitations. They were a constant menace to the settlers as they made a business of stealing, depending on it as a source of livelihood.

Frémont felt that safety lay in traveling through the more open country of the valley and accordingly changed his course from the foothill region

to that of the lower levels. They had gone but a short distance when an Indian was observed riding toward them at full speed. Maxwell was ahead, and knowing that the rider was intending to inform others of his tribe to intercept the whites, Maxwell headed in his direction. As the Captain and Godey appeared on the scene a duel was taking place between the two. The Indian was armed with bow and arrows and Maxwell with a pistol. Perhaps, it is unnecessary to state that the pistol won.

Continuing southward the Captain kept a few men along the foothills as scouts until he reached the Kings River country where he was to meet the others of his party under the guidance of Walker. They had not arrived and he passed the time in making some near-by explorations. The Indians were always close at hand, and in spite of a strict watch, succeeded in killing a mule that had strayed into a little ravine in the vicinity of the camp. He climbed the mountains to an elevation of ten thousand feet and a snowstorm added to the zest of the experience. Returning to the valley he searched for the Walker party, but without success, so he concluded they must be traveling at a leisurely gait and enjoying the fine hunting along the way. Weary from waiting he set out for Sutter's, where he arrived on January 15th; remaining there four days he went to Yerba Buena (San Francisco) taking eight of his men with him. From Captain Sutter, who was a Mexican magistrate, he obtained a passport to Monterey. While in San Francisco he visited the American Consul, Lienesdorff, and was taken by a Captain Hinckley to see the quicksilver mine at

New Almaden. His host insisted on making part of the trip by water, but they were becalmed on San Francisco Bay and spent a cold and dreary night amid the rushes near Alviso. However, the visit to the mine, with its many interesting features, well repaid him for the unpleasant hours in an open boat. In a letter written to Mrs. Frémont, dated January 26, 1846, he describes briefly his journey thus far and adds that his "hair is growing gray before its time," which is not at all strange considering the hardships he had endured and the perils he had faced.

Accompanied by Consul Lienesdorff the Captain left for Monterey, but somewhere beyond the Mission Dolores they lost their way in the darkness and fog, at last arriving at the rancho of Don Francisco Sanchez, where they stopped for the night. He enjoyed the ride down the Santa Clara valley with its green fields and many spreading oaks. On reaching Monterey he went immediately to see the American Consul, Thomas O. Larkin. His object in visiting Monterey was to obtain permission to bring his party into the settlement for the purpose of repairing and adding to his equipment. He next paid a visit to the office of Governor Pio Pico, who was in Los Angeles. He then saw the Commanding General, Don José Castro, and ex-Governor Alvarado. He explained to them that he was engaged in surveying the nearest route from the United States to the Pacific Ocean for commercial purposes; that he was under the direction of the Topographical Engineers, and that the men with him were not soldiers but citizens. He re-

frained from mentioning that each one was a dead shot. Permission was readily granted and he was cordially treated by the Mexican authorities.

By the middle of February the party was all together, camped about thirteen miles south of the present city of San Jose. The reason for the apparent delay of the main division in meeting Frémont at Kings River was due to a misunderstanding with Walker in regard to the river in question. He thought that Frémont referred to another river to which no name had been given. It was here that his party expected to meet the Captain and lingered for some time. Frémont gave a name to this river, calling it Kern after his topographer. To one of the lakes he gave the name of Owens. It is from the Owens River that Los Angeles now receives its water supply. Walker began searching for the leader of the expedition and by chance ran into Carson, who was out looking for him. They were now reunited and happy in the balmy Santa Clara Valley, where the sun shone brightly, and where, from the carpet of green nature had spread, the poppy lifted its cup of gold.

“Many Californians visited the camp,” writes the Captain, “and very friendly relations grew up with us. One day amusements were going on as usual, the Californians showing our men their admirable horsemanship. One of the large vultures, often seen floating about overhead, had been brought down with a broken wing by one of our rifles. This was the point on which we excelled as the others excelled in perfect horsemanship. The vulture was sitting on the frame of a cart to which

he had been tied; he had gotten over his hurt and would have been treated as a pet, but his savage nature would not permit of any approach. By accident a Californian had gotten a fall and the whole camp was laughing and shouting and Owens, his mouth wide open, was backing toward the cart to rest his arm on the wheel, forgetful of the vulture. The vulture with long, red neck stretched out was seizing the opportunity—we all saw it and Owens saw our amusement, but not quite in time to escape the grip of the vulture. It was quite a picture—the vulture lying in wait and Owens's unconsciousness, and the hearty laugh which cheered the bird's exploit."

At that time the Santa Cruz Mountains were known as Wild Cat Ridge and Frémont's curiosity was aroused by the stories of the big trees that grow on the west side of the range. Accordingly on March 22nd he resumed his examination of the California country by making a trip into that section. He probably visited the Big Basin above Santa Cruz for he speaks of the giant redwoods, some attaining a diameter of fourteen feet and being over two hundred feet in height. He must have enjoyed the days spent in these redwood groves that "make of the night a dusky slave forever held in thrall," where the sunlight falls in yellow shafts between the huge trunks and where the Solitude weaves her garment of mosses in the soft dusk of the forest isles.

Frémont remained on the upper portion of the mountains for several days at an elevation of two thousand feet. He always had a home in mind and

was attracted by first one place and then another. He liked the pine woods and their fragrance; he was charmed by the soft air of the Santa Clara and the wonderful beauty of its oaks and flowers, but it seemed to him that no home would be ideal if he could not feel the salty tang of the sea and listen to the voice of the waves. The Santa Cruz shore possessed all of the requisites he demanded for a home. It was a place to which he could bring his mother, for here was "the invigorating salt breeze which brings with it renewed strength." So on the beach at Santa Cruz he indulged in daydreams, while the pilgrim seas marched in freighted with music and mystery.

On February 25th the party was near the northwestern point of Monterey Bay. A heavy southeast storm set in, which may be expected at this season of the year. It lasted several days and when the weather cleared they proceeded to Hartnell's ranch, twenty-five miles from the town of Monterey. At this particular time there was much talk of Mexico expelling Americans from California. It was reported that unless they should become Mexican citizens their property would be taken from them. The previous July the governor had been ordered to halt incoming Americans. Those who had obtained land, as they thought in a legal manner, felt much uneasiness over conditions. The settlers began to consider the best way to offset this manifest injustice and there was much agitation among them. The spirit of independence had grown very strong in California with the Americans most pronounced in their opposition to Mexico. In fact, revolution

was in the air and Frémont's arrival with his sixty sharpshooters seemed to precipitate matters. He came into the territory at the opportune time to stir things up.

The Captain was now on his way to a pass at the "head of the western branch of the Salinas River" opening into the San Joaquin Valley—probably Pacheco Pass—when the quiet of the camp was upset by the appearance of a cavalry officer, Lieutenant Chavez, and two men. They rode up very briskly, the Lieutenant presenting a communication from the Commanding General at Monterey. The officer was needlessly abrupt, assuming a demeanor not calculated to win the esteem of the sensitive Captain Frémont. The letter contained an order for the expedition's commander to move out of the territory as rapidly as possible, otherwise he would be summarily ejected by the Mexican troops. For a moment Frémont was dumfounded, but recovering his composure, he informed the curt Lieutenant that such an order was unworthy a man in Castro's position, and to tell the Commanding General that he absolutely refused to obey a command that was insulting to both himself and his government. He felt that he had conducted himself in a most gentlemanly manner, as had his men, and that the order from Castro, with whom he had maintained very cordial relations, was wholly unwarranted and decidedly rude. Of course had the Captain done the polite thing, he would have traveled out of the territory as rapidly as possible, hardly giving his men time to cinch up their saddles; but this was not Frémont. He was not the man to be

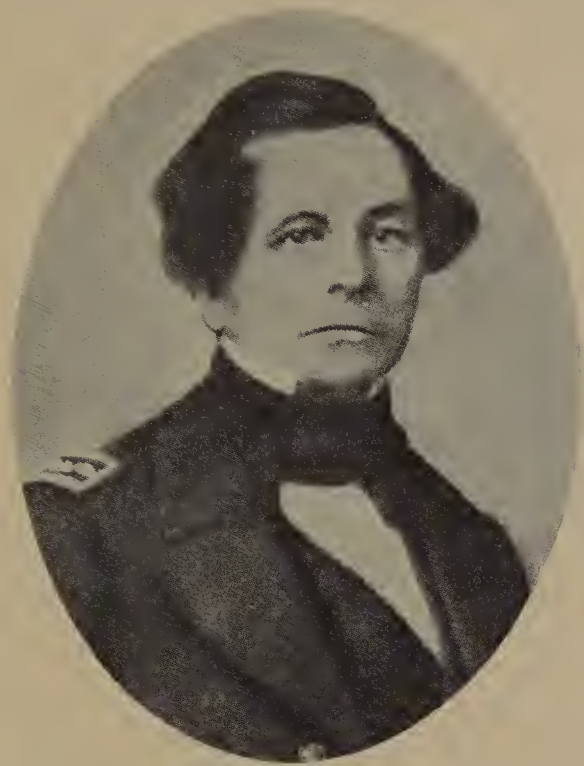
driven. As we have said heretofore, he was both temperamental and impulsive. There was much of the sensitive poet in his makeup and, as a rule, poets are not creatures to take peremptory orders. He resented this one as a gross insult and his men took the same view, announcing themselves as ready to back him in any course he should adopt. It may be said that afterward Frémont learned that Castro had acted in accordance with instructions from the Mexican government. No doubt the Captain knew that Castro would not care to oppose his body of sixty marksmen and felt quite safe in sending Officer Chavez back to his general with the refusal to obey the command, which probably caused an explosion in military headquarters.

The next day the Captain and his men marched to the high hills east of Salinas and took up their position on Gavilan Peak (locally known as Gabilan), which rises to a height of about two thousand feet and which is almost due south from the town of San Juan. In recent years this peak bears the name of the intrepid explorer. The Native Sons of the Golden West, on October 4, 1925, marked this spot by placing a bronze plaque at the base of a seventy-five foot flagpole. An annual pilgrimage is made to the summit of the peak. From this elevation an admirable view of the surrounding country is obtained. To the west lies the Salinas Valley and the road to Monterey, while eastward, beyond a line of barren hills, is the San Joaquin.

The position chosen by Frémont was almost impregnable and was rendered doubly so by the erection of a fort of logs. With his sixty dead shots he

felt that in case Castro carried out his commands he would be able to give a memorable account of himself. On the completion of the rudely constructed fort the American flag was flung to the breeze amid the cheers of the men. For three days the Captain remained here with colors flying, meantime watching the movements of Castro's troops below at the Mission San Juan. He could see them plainly with the aid of his glass. The vaqueros, who brought him an ox from a ranch in the valley, said the Indians at San Juan were furnished with much liquor in order to inspire courage. On the afternoon of the second day a body of cavalry was seen advancing up the wood road that ran from the Monterey road to the camp. With forty men the Captain went a short distance away and secreted himself in a thicket to await them, but when within a few hundred yards the Mexicans halted and after some consultation turned back. It was well they did, for otherwise California history might have contained another interesting chapter.

During the evening of the third day the pole bearing the flag fell down, and thinking that he had remained as long as the occasion required, Frémont took advantage of the accident to say to the men that it was an indication for them to move camp and he gave orders to this effect. Immediately after he had gone an Englishman came to the summit of the peak with a note from Castro. It is said that the missive contained the proposition that the Captain should unite his force with that of the commanding general and jointly march against Governor Pio Pico. Taking into consideration the rather chaotic



COMMODORE JOHN B. MONTGOMERY

Who raised the American flag in San Francisco, July 7, 1846.

condition of Mexican politics then existing, and their habit of starting revolutions, Frémont was inclined to believe the rumor. The bearer of this message was John Gilroy, after whom the town of Gilroy was named. Some correspondence ensued between Frémont and Consul Larkin at Monterey. The native courier who carried the letters exchanged between them said the two thousand of his countrymen would not be able to force the Captain out of the territory. At this time there was serious friction between General Castro and Pio Pico. On June 8th, 1846, the former declared martial law and a little later Pio Pico started from Los Angeles with a military force to compel Castro to yield to his authority, but the belligerent attitude of the American settlers changed the whole aspect of affairs. An extract from a letter of Larkin's to the Secretary of State gives a very good idea of the situation arising from the Frémont incident:

"The General informed the Alcalde on the night of the 10th instant that Captain Frémont had left his encampment and that he (the general) would pursue and attack him at the first opportunity and chastise him for hoisting a foreign flag in California. In a postscript of the same letter the General stated that Captain Frémont had crossed a small river and was three miles from them; but Castro made no preparations to follow him. On the morning of the 11th the General sent John Gilroy, an Englishman, long resident in this country, to make offers of arrangement to Captain Frémont. On his arrival at the camp ground he found that Captain Frémont had left that morning with his party; the

camp fire was still burning. He found in the camp the staff used for the flag, tent poles (cut on the spot), some old clothes, two old and useless pack saddles, which the Californians had magnified into munitions of war. General Castro informed his party that he had received various messages from the camp of Captain Frémont, threatening to exterminate the Californians, etc. (but will hardly name his messengers, nor did they put any confidence in it themselves). . . . A few people who were ordered to march from San Francisco to join the General at his camp had returned to their homes. On the 12th a proclamation was put up by the General in the billiard room (not the usual place) informing the inhabitants that a band of highwaymen under Captain Frémont of the United States Army had come within the towns of this department and that he with two hundred patriots had driven them out and sent them into the back country. Some of the officers of the two hundred patriots (and more were expected to join them) arrived in Monterey and reported that the cowards had run, that they had driven them into the Sacramento River; some added that they had driven them into the bullrushes on the plains of the Sacramento and that in their haste they had left some of their best horses behind. The horses proved to be those of the Californians themselves which had strayed into Captain Frémont's band (being an everyday occurrence in California) and on raising camp they were turned out and left behind. Instead of the Americans being driven out of the country they traveled a less distance for three or four days than

the natives did in returning to Monterey, moving from four to six miles a day."

In another letter Consul Larkin says that General Castro had received dispatches ordering him to drive Frémont out of the department, and which order, with two hundred men and one hundred more daily expected, he pretended to execute.

"The undersigned has not supposed during the whole affair," concludes the Consul, "that General Castro wished to go after Captain Frémont and was very confident that with all of California he would not have attacked him, even had he been sure of destroying the whole party as five times their number could have taken their place before the expected battle. Captain Frémont received verbal application from both English and Americans to join his party and could have mustered as many men as the natives. He was careful not to do so. Although he discharged five or six of his men, he took no others in their place."

As will be seen Frémont had no intention of antagonizing the Mexican officials, or of doing anything to embarrass the United States government. While he was extremely careful not to compromise his country, he felt that it was only right to defend himself in case of an attack as his mission was wholly peaceful. On leaving his camp on the mountain peak he descended the range on the southeast side and stopped for the night at a creek within three miles of General Castro's camp. That he was in no hurry to obey the command of the Mexican official is evident from his deliberate movements.

The 11th of the month saw him in the San Joa-

quin Valley on his way north where he experienced real summer weather. Traveling by easy stages they camped on the Tuolumne River March 14th and on the 21st reached the Sacramento, stopping a day later at their old camping place opposite the home of Mr. Grimes. They remained for several days, allowing the animals to feed on the splendid range between the river and the hills. In a journey of thirty miles they came to the Keyser rancho on the Bear River, an affluent of the Feather River, the largest tributary of the Sacramento. Their route led over a beautiful undulating country of oaks and flowering shrubs, covered with fields of yellow poppies interspersed with the blue lupine. In the early spring these poppies, indigenous to California, riot over hill and dale in reckless profusion, looking at a distance like a huge yellow blaze on the landscape. Ranches were scarce and the land lay in all its virgin beauty with thousands of flaming flowers to gladden the eye and great oaks to offer their kindly shade.

As the party approached more closely to the Sierras the country grew more picturesque. They came to the Feather River some twenty miles from its junction with the Sacramento. Here also was the mouth of the Yuba River, named after a tribe of Indians that inhabited the region, and who helped them to cross the stream in their canoes. There was a big ranch on the Yuba, stocked with three thousand head of cattle and yielding twenty-five bushels of wheat to the acre. Indians were hired to perform the labor. Some miles above on Butte Creek the Captain found his old companion, Neal, who

had accompanied him on his second expedition, occupying a good, well-stocked rancho. He had quit blacksmithing for Sutter and had a place he could call his own. In this brief time he was a prosperous rancher, which attests the fertility of California soil.

There was an Indian village close by and the inhabitants, who were as naked as when they were born, ran foot races for the head of a cow, the animal having been presented to the Frémont party. On March 30th, camping on one of the tributaries of the Sacramento, the travelers were annoyed by swarms of mosquitoes which infest the valley during the spring and summer months. Near at hand was the ranch of Mr. Lassen, whose name was given to the peak that is now an active volcano. Here Frémont rested six days, taking ample time to leave California territory and continued up the Sacramento, coming to the first rapids of this river shortly after his departure from Lassen's. The Sacramento is navigable for over two hundred miles. Its waters were alive with salmon and the men speared some of them which were roasted before the camp fire.

On the 6th they got a glimpse of Mount Shastl (Shasta) lifting its snow-crowned head above the northern ridges in majestic splendor. The Coast Range showed a prominent peak to which Frémont gave the name of Mount Linn, in remembrance of his friend, Senator Linn of Missouri. The maps of today show the name spelled Lynn. It was the Captain's intention to go north along the Cascade Range into Oregon and there to connect with

his survey of 1843. He was now in an interesting and heavily wooded country where game was plentiful. His course lay up the Pit River, and he speaks in his journal of seeing a new and singular shrub (manzanita) which has smooth, reddish bark and pale green leaves oval in form. From its red berries the Indians make a drink which is very refreshing and pleasing to the taste. In some parts of the Southwest the natives use the leaves as tobacco.

Frémont continued to explore and map the region with Mount Shasta always in view. "As lone as God and white as a winter moon," it looms above the surrounding country, robed in its garment of eternal white, imperial and majestic. Turning southward the Captain retraced his steps down the valley, reaching Lassen's on the 11th of April, where for the two following nights he set up his transit and observed the longitude with accuracy. The day he left Lassen's for his northern journey, April 24th, was made memorable by a fight between Mexicans and American Dragoons on the Rio Grande, though, of course, no one in California knew of the occurrence. The annexation of Texas gave to that state the territory extending to the Rio Grande where General Taylor was ordered to proceed and where trouble resulted. Naturally, with his knowledge of affairs, Frémont anticipated this and was in no hurry to leave California territory, preferring to linger and enjoy the spring flowers.

CHAPTER VII

The Tragedy at Klamath Lake

Again the expedition followed up the Sacramento, reaching the head of the lower valley on the second day and traveling along one of the many beautiful creeks that flow into the river. In the bottom lands were much grass and many acorns and the abundance of game was a constant delight to the hunters. One evening, while making camp in a grove of oaks, they discovered that they were about to occupy a veritable bear's den. There were bears all around them and trouble began at once. Four were killed in a few moments and Delaware Charlie, whose horse fell with him, was in immediate danger, but was saved from bruin's wrath by the other men. In falling, the hammer of his gun hit him on the bridge of his nose, breaking it in the middle. As there was no surgeon with the party Frémont performed a surgical operation and managed to get the nose back into shape for which the Delaware was eternally grateful.

The face of the country now began to assume a mountainous character, oak and pine being intermingled, and the ground rather rocky. There was a three-leaved flower that elicited the Captain's admiration. Its blossoms waved above the grass on a long stem and had all the appearance of a living butterfly. This was the famous Mariposa Lily celebrated in song and story. In describing this region Frémont loves to dwell on the beauty of it, which

made a deep impression on his artistic soul. As he advanced, the mountain slopes rose rapidly, covered with a heavy growth of pines. In crossing one of the high ridges there were patches of snow. Just before noon he reached a pass in the main ridge of the Sierra Nevada. It was in an open forest and had an elevation of four thousand six hundred feet. This pass was the terminating point of the northern link of the Sierras, at which the Cascade begins. On descending the mountain they entered a basin lying north and south along the Cascades. While there were numerous pines it was unlike the Sacramento country, as there was little grass growing under the trees. It was well watered and there were several good-sized lakes, but the region was unknown to Frémont and his men. He could learn nothing of it from the Indians he encountered, who were disposed to be friendly. Therefore he gave his own names to some of its natural features. Lake Rhett in Northern California he named after a warm friend, Mr. Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina, who was connected with an event in Frémont's life, "which brought with it an abiding satisfaction." He does not say what this was. His camp at this lake was about twenty-five or thirty miles from the lava beds near which General Canby was killed by the Modocs twenty-seven years later.

Now came a real cause for worry. While in Round Valley Archambeau, who was an inveterate hunter, went away toward the mountains and failed to return during the day. Night came and went and still no Archambeau. The Captain did not break camp, but sent men out to look for him.

The second day went by without any trace of the lost hunter. Frémont's anxiety increased. He well knew the danger from Indians, and although he had seen none, he knew they were in the vicinity. It would have been less difficult to hunt for a man in a prairie country, but here among the woods where one could see for only a short distance, and where one was limited to a comparatively small area, it was a perplexing problem. The Indians of that particular locality bore a reputation for treachery and were very daring. The Hudson Bay Company's men, who had penetrated the region, met with rough experiences and on one occasion "a party of trappers from the North were encamped on a stream of the Cascade Range, and having been led into carelessness by the apparent friendly conduct of the Indians, were every man killed." It was no difficult matter for the Indians to waylay a single man bent on obtaining game. Archambeau had with him only a small supply of dried meat when he left camp and this would not last long. As the hours dragged by and no trace of him could be found the men became very much alarmed. The Captain had always been very careful of the members of his expedition. He had lost but few and these only by accident or imprudence. On the third day about sunset a shout went up from the guards and the lost Archambeau hobbled into camp just able to drag one foot after the other. He was completely fagged and his horse was in the same condition. It seems he had wandered off in the hills in search of game and did not realize it was growing so late until darkness was upon him. The following

two days were given to hunting for camp as he had lost his sense of direction. Once a band of Indians, doubtless going to the mountains to fish, came into view and he immediately descended a sharp slope and remained out of sight. He was very much frightened for the moment, but kept his head, which many men are not apt to do under similar circumstances. His horse having little opportunity to graze was greatly weakened and at once began to make up for lost time, Archangeau was a happy man when he struck the trail of the Frémont party. A night's rest and he was himself again. After three days spent here the animals were in a fit condition to resist orders to move and the men, now that their comrade had returned safely, were in excellent spirits. The day after they made a long march and camped on a stream flowing into Lake Rhett, which the Captain called McCrady after one of his boyhood friends.

On the forenoon of May 6th they reached Klamath Lake at its outlet, which was a great fishing station of the Indians. It will be remembered that on his former trip Frémont had mistaken Klamath Meadows for Klamath Lake and he now made the discovery that the Sacramento River does not head in this body of water. Here they met many Indians who, although they were taken by surprise, received them with apparent friendship. However, there was no warmth in their welcome, but a "shyness which came naturally from their hostility." The Indians had fixed habitations around the shores of the lake and at the outlet were a number of permanent huts. The elevation at this spot is more

than four thousand feet. It was a bright sunny morning when Frémont arrived here and he would have been only too glad to range over the water in an Indian canoe. Its silent shores with the great mountains overshadowing it lent an air of mystery to the lake and invited research. The Indians gave him to understand that there was another large river at the head of the lake where they caught many fish.

Continuing his journey between the lake and the mountains he made camp on a small creek that ran from the woods and which he named Denny's Branch. The weather remained refreshingly cool and as they passed on to the north their way was frequently blocked by decayed logs and fallen trees. The traveling was necessarily slow owing to the obstructions placed in their pathway by the wash of rains from the foothills. While this part of the country was known to trappers, it was practically unexplored, no definite maps having been made of it. This was a task Frémont felt he should undertake. It was his ambition to make a thorough examination of the locality for the purposes of science and to give to the world something more reliable than maps showing Mary's Lake and Buenaventura River. He also looked forward to a meeting with the Indian chief whom he had met in the winter of '43 at the meadows above the Klamath and whom he had hired to guide the party through the snow. His plan was to continue the survey throughout the spring, visiting the headwaters of the principal streams and providing material for a good map of the country along the base of the mountains. Then

there was the possibility of fine harbors being found on the coast and of mountain passes connecting the interior with the sea. He had all these things in mind, and the high white peaks of the Cascades, with their sunset hues, stood out in his memory with enchanting vividness. But it was not Frémont's destiny to do any of these things of which he dreamed. Fate decreed otherwise. He had a leading rôle to play in the conquest of California and the curtain was about to rise on the first scene of this historic drama.

"I was standing alone by my camp fire," he writes, "enjoying its warmth, for the night air of early spring is chill under the shadows of the high mountains. Suddenly my ear caught the faint sounds of horses' feet and while I was watching and listening as the sounds, so strange hereabout, came nearer, there emerged from the darkness into the circle of the firelight two horsemen riding slowly as though horse and man were fatigued from long traveling. In the foremost I recognized the familiar face of Neal, with a companion I also knew. They had ridden nearly a hundred miles in the last two days, having been sent forward by a United States officer, who was on my trail with dispatches for me; but Neal doubted if he would get through. After their horses had been turned into the band and they were seated by my fire, refreshing themselves with good coffee, while more solid food was being prepared, Neal told me his story. The officer who was trying to overtake me was named Gillespie. He had been sent to California by the government and had letters for delivery to me. Neal knew

the great danger from Indians in this country, and his party becoming alarmed and my trail being fresh, Mr. Gillespie had sent forward Neal and Sigler upon their best horses to overtake me and inform me of his situation. They had left him on the morning of the day before and in the two days had ridden nearly a hundred miles and this last day had severely tried the strength of their horses. When they parted from him they had not yet reached the lake and for greater safety had not kept my trail quite to the outlet, but crossed to the right bank of the river, striking my trail again on the lake shore. They had discovered Indians on my trail after they had left Gillespie and on the upper part of the lake the Indians had tried to cut them off and they had escaped only on account of the speed and the strength of their horses, which Neal had brought from his own rancho. He said that in his opinion I could not reach Gillespie in time to save him as he had with him only three men and was traveling slow."

The Captain saw that quick action was necessary, but it would be impossible to go back over the trail in the darkness of the night. The arrival of Neal was a time of excitement for Frémont, who could scarcely sleep in thinking over the messages from the government and what information they might contain. The following morning before daylight he began preparations for the backward journey. He chose ten of his men to accompany him, including Carson, Stepp, Owens, Godey, and Lajeunesse. Snow and fallen timber made the ride hard and long to where the Captain expected to meet the officer. No Indians were seen and in the

afternoon, having ridden about forty-five miles, they reached a spot where the forest was open to the lake and where, in a small meadow land, there was plenty of grass and good water. Here they camped to await the arrival of Gillespie. It was near sunset when four men emerged from the woods and in a few moments the Captain met Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie of the marine corps. It was a meeting filled with enthusiasm, as the Lieutenant carried letters from home for both Frémont and some of his men. It was more than eleven months since any news of the East had reached them, and the officer's coming was hailed with great joy.

Gillespie told Frémont that he had taken the shortest possible route to reach California — through Mexico to Mazatlan—and that he was under orders from the President and the Secretary of the Navy to find the Captain wherever he might be. At Monterey the Lieutenant was informed that Frémont was probably on the Sacramento. On learning at Sutter's Fort that he had gone on up the valley, he obtained the services of Neal and followed after, traveling in all about six hundred miles. As heretofore stated, the mission of Frémont had been to all intent and purposes a peaceful one. A few days more would have found him still further north, but now Mr. Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, had sent Gillespie to give him an idea of the new turn of affairs in regard to California and the aim and intentions of the government. Gillespie was also the bearer of dispatches to Commodore Sloat.

"The information through Gillespie," says Fré-

mont, "had absolved me from my duty as explorer and I was left to my duty as an officer of the American army with the further authoritative knowledge that the government intended to take California. I was warned by my government of the new danger against which I was bound to defend myself and it had been made known to me now on the authority of the Secretary of the Navy that to obtain possession of California was the chief object of the President."

Among the Lieutenant's letters was one of introduction from Mr. Buchanan, Secretary of State. Gillespie told the Captain that the Secretary desired that he should ascertain the wishes of the California people and to find this out with a "view to counteracting the designs of the British Government upon the country." There were a number of letters from Senator Benton, which, though worded very diplomatically, nevertheless conveyed certain intelligence to guide Frémont's future actions.

It is said that after Gillespie had left Sutter's in pursuit of Frémont Captain Sutter wrote to Castro warning him against the Lieutenant as an agent of the United States and recommending the establishment of an effective garrison before any more American emigrants should arrive. If this be true Sutter was, indeed, loyal to Mexico!

There was much animated talk around the camp fire the night Gillespie arrived. None of the men retired early and Frémont last of all. He sat by the fire reading and re-reading his letters and ruminating over the sudden change of events. Castro had ordered him out of the country, but he was now to

return and aid the President in his desire to acquire California for the Union. In substance the orders he received were to "act descreetly, but positively." Under the confidential instructions of Mr. Bancroft Frémont felt warranted in taking action. Gillespie was directed to act in concert with him and great vigilance was required of them both, for it was desired that possession of the territory should be accomplished before any foreign ships of war should arrive. That there was to be war with Mexico was inevitable. The dream of Senator Benton was about to be realized—the shore of the Pacific Ocean was to mark the western limit of the United States. The Captain resolved "to move forward on the opportunity and return forthwith to the Sacramento Valley," in order to bring all the influence he could command to acquire Cailifornia.

Suddenly in the midst of his cogitations he was startled by a quick movement of the animals, which were grazing near the lake less than a hundred yards away. He was sure there were no Indians on his trail and Gillespie had assured him there were none on his. But something had alarmed the horses and mules. Taking his revolver he went cautiously down among the animals. Each mule was standing silent with long ears pointed forward, a thing a mule rarely does unless his curiosity is aroused by the appearance of some one, or by a sound that he fails to understand. Frémont was puzzled by the action of the animals and stood for some time watching and listening. This was the only night save one he had neglected to put men on guard in an Indian country. He always believed in this precaution, but



THE MONTEREY CYPRESS

Mentioned so frequently in Frémont's reports and memoirs, are stunted and gnarled because of exposure to the almost constant winds. The cypress has been the theme of poets and artists since the early days of California history. They add rugged beauty to the Monterey coast.

in this instance he felt comparatively safe. The waters of the lake lay calm and unruffled. A deep silence lay heavy on the land—a silence that forboded evil. The crickets had ceased their singing and the music of the frogs was stilled. In a few moments the horses resumed their grazing and, thinking that a coyote or some other prowler was the cause of alarm, the Captain returned to camp and retired for the night. There were three fires burning, the camp being thus divided, and near to each, out of the light of the fire, were the men belonging to it. Beds had been made under some overhanging boughs of the cedars that hemmed them in on three sides. For a long time Frémont lay unable to sleep, his mind busy with the events of the last few hours and wondering what Fate had in store for him. He listened to the occasional snapping of the fire and saw the surrounding darkness grow lighter as the blaze would suddenly flash up, only to flicker out, leaving the camp more gloomy than before. Somewhere in the great forest a cougar wailed dismally and an owl hooted from a neighboring tree. There was a chirp of a sleepy bird from an adjacent thicket—a plaintive little note to let him know, perhaps, that it had a song in reserve when the morning sun came up. These sounds—and there are many in the forest at night—gradually lulled Frémont to sleep. Later he was suddenly awakened by hearing Carson call to Basil to know what the “matter was over there.” There was an instant of silence. Then Carson and Owens cried in one voice “Indians!” In the space of a heartbeat the camp was all action. The sound that woke Carson was that of an ax crushing

in the head of Basil Lajeunesse. This was immediately followed by the groans of another of the party—Denny, a half-breed, whose body was pierced by five arrows. At the sound of the ax the Delawares sprang to their feet, rifles in hand, while Frémont, Carson, Godey, Stepp, and Owens entered the fray just as the Klamaths charged into the open ground. The camp fires afforded but little light, but enough for them to see the Delaware, Crane, jumping from side to side in Indian style and defending himself with the butt of his gun, which for some unaccountable reason he had neglected to load. Then followed the sharp crack of rifles spitting fire into the darkness, while the arrows—silent messengers of death—flew around the little band of frontiersmen fighting for their lives. For a few moments all was confusion. The Klamath chief, who was at the head of his men, plunged forward with a bullet in his heart, killed by Stepp according to Kit Carson. Crane went down fighting bravely to the end. Checked in their onslaught by the rapid fire of the men and the death of their chief, the Klamaths sought the cover of darkness and continued to pour in their arrows. A blanket was thrown over the body of Crane. Blankets were also hung on the boughs to protect the men from the arrows that came hissing through the air. At last the Indians made a fierce attempt to get the body of the chief, but were continually repulsed by the steady rifle fire of the explorers. To a certain extent they fired at random as most of the battle took place in the dark and the Klamaths appeared as vague shadows under the cover of night. The position of the Fré-

mont party was exceedingly grave, but the men trained to such emergencies kept their heads and replied to the fusillade of arrows with repeated shots. Once Godey stepped out into the firelight, something having gone wrong with his gun, when Carson exclaimed, "Look at the fool!" Unmindful of the danger to which he had exposed himself, he looked resentfully at Carson and continued to examine his rifle with all the coolness imaginable—a fair target for the arrows of the Klamaths.

Throughout the night the men sat behind their blanket shelter, expecting every minute a renewal of the attack, which they were now well prepared to meet. At length the light of dawn began to creep in through the woods. The Klamaths had vanished. It had been a terrible ordeal—fighting shadows in the dark—and they were glad to see the day. By their tracks the Captain judged that fifteen or twenty Indians were engaged in the attack. In the gray of the morning a sad sight met their eyes. Three of the party lay dead—Basil, Crane, and Denny. One of the Delawares had a bad wound. They had lost nearly one-fourth of their number. The chief, who had been killed, was recognized by Gillespie as the Indian who had given him a salmon at the outlet of the lake. An English half-ax was fastened to his wrist. It was the one that had been driven into the head of poor Basil as he lay asleep. In his rage Carson seized the ax and crushed in the skull of the dead chief, while one of the Delawares took his scalp. There were some forty arrows in his quiver. Carson said they were the "most beautiful and warlike he had ever seen." Each arrow head

was a sharply pointed piece of iron or steel, no doubt obtained from some of the traders of the Hudson Bay Company. They were poisoned for about six inches from the tips. At close range such arrows are as deadly as bullets as they can be driven deeply into a pine tree. Gloom settled over the camp. The men thirsted for revenge. For a far lesser crime than this Carson and Godey had gone on the war-path and now they were simply furious. For the moment Frémont forgot everything else in his desire to punish the Klamaths before leaving the country. It was only a few days before that he had divided his meat with these Indians and given them tobacco and knives. And to repay him in such a brutal manner! His anger knew no bounds.

On leaving the main division of his men the Captain had instructed them as soon as they had breakfasted to move south to a camp where they had stopped a few nights before. This would put them about twenty-five miles distant. Placing the dead on the mules he started back over his old trail to rejoin the main camp. Before he had traveled two hours many canoes were to be seen on the lake. They were coming from different directions and were apparently heading for a place where the trail ran very close to the water's edge. Frémont felt that should a fight occur the bodies of the dead men would prove a great handicap, so he turned abruptly toward the hills and proceeded to bury them in a laurel thicket, the men digging shallow graves with their knives. Here beneath the laurel they were laid to rest and here they sleep away the unnumbered centuries. Basil, who was always referred to by Fré-

mont as his "favorite," had been with him since his first expedition. The Captain felt the loss of this brave voyageur very keenly and his death was mourned by all of the men. The Delawares were plunged in grief over the killing of Crane and Denny. They blackened their faces, a custom among them when mourning for the dead. They were very silent. That evening the camp was strangely quiet. The men sat around caressing their firearms and saying nothing. Frémont went over to the Delawares' fire and, sitting down, spoke sympathetically to them. They were quietly smoking. The Captain gives the conversation that ensued as follows:

"After a pause I said, 'Swanok, bad luck come this time. Crane was a brave. Good man, too. I am very sorry.'

" 'Very sick here,' he said, striking his hand against his breast, 'Delaware all sick.'

" 'There are Indians around the camp, Swanok,' I replied.

" 'Yes, I see him; me and Sagundai and Charlie gone out and see him in the woods.'

" 'How many?'

" 'Maybe ten, maybe twenty, maybe more.'

" 'Where did they go?'

" 'Up mountain. He not long way.'

" 'Listen, Swanok! We kill some. These same men kill Crane. How best kill him?'

"The chief's eyes glittered and his face relaxed and all of the Delawares raised their heads.

" 'You go in morning. Which way?'

" 'Only three, four mile to creek which you know

over there,' I replied pointing up the lake. 'Next day big Indian village.'

"Swanok turned to Sagundai and the two chiefs spoke earnestly for a few moments, the others deeply interested, but gravely listening without speaking.

" 'Captain,' said Sagundai, 'in the morning you go little way, stop. These Delaware stay here. Indian come in camp, Delaware kill him.' "

This plan struck Frémont as very good. Accordingly it was carried out the following day. The Delawares accompanied the party for several hundred yards, then leaving their horses with the Captain, they returned on foot and secreted themselves in a clump of young pines near the camp. After an interval of half an hour or so there was the report of guns, followed in a short time by the arrival of the Delawares, who proudly exhibited two scalps. As had been expected, the Klamaths rushed in as soon as the camp was deserted only to meet the fire of those in ambush. Some of the Indians escaped owing to the overanxiety of the Delawares to even up the score. However, they felt much better now that they had scalped two of their enemies.

Meantime the rest of the party had arrived and they were all together. They went on for several miles and camped in an open space among the pines, constructing a tight corral into which all the animals were driven. The next night the same procedure was carried out, the Indians becoming more wary in their movements. The party was now quite close to the principal village at the inlet of the lake and extra precautions were taken. When within

a few miles of the village Carson and Owens, with ten men, were directed to go ahead and reconnoiter. They were instructed to avoid an engagement with the Indians if possible until the rest of the party should arrive. As Frémont and the others neared the mouth of the river they heard the report of rifles and found that the Klamaths had discovered Carson and his men, and they had no alternative but to open the fight. They had driven the redskins across the river, and Frémont noticed, as he rode up, a dead Indian in a canoe with the paddle still in his hand. On his feet were shoes closely resembling those Basil had worn when he was killed. Here the river, which was about sixty yards wide, was fordable, and Frémont crossed it in defense of Carson and the others, who were engaged with a large number of Klamaths. They had left their village and were now scattered among the sage brush that covered the river bank. There was no darkness to conceal their movements. It was a fair fight in broad daylight and in the open. The Klamaths relied on their arrows, thinking the range was short, and evidently intended to make a stand, but the rifle fire was too severe and they ran for the woods, leaving fourteen of their band dead upon the field. Their decision to make a hard fight was sadly upset. Behind each clump of sage brush that had sheltered them they had laid their arrows carefully spread out that they might handle them quickly, but the shots of the Frémont party were so true and so deadly that few of the foremost Klamaths survived. When the field was clear the Captain set fire to the Indian huts, which destroyed a quantity of fish they were

drying on scaffolds. These huts were built of rushes and willows and burned like tinder. None of the men were wounded in the brief encounter. Frémont camped in the woods about a mile from the village, again throwing up a strong corral for the animals. His scouts were kept out and his horses were all saddled.

In the afternoon the Klamaths were reported to be advancing through the timber. Taking with him Carson, Stepp, Archambeau, and the two Delaware chiefs, he rode out to learn what the Indians had in mind. He was mounted on the fleet-footed Sacramento, who was renowned for his wonderful ability to make leaps and bounds when occasion required. This particular day Sacramento sprang over an oak tree which had been blown down by the wind. This elicited a warning from Carson that the horse would yet break the Captain's neck. When in the midst of the woods they came suddenly upon a Klamath scout, who was already drawing his bow when they saw him. Carson, who was in the lead, attempted to fire, but his gun snapped. As he swerved away the Indian was about to send an arrow into the noted scout when Frémont fired, missing the redskin, whereupon he drove Sacramento directly over the Indian, knocking him down and causing his arrow to go wild. At that moment Sagundai leaped from his horse and struck the Klamath on the head with his war club. It all happened in less time than it takes to tell it. It was one of the many narrow escapes that Carson had had during his adventurous career; he seemed to bear a charmed life. The arrows of the Indian were poisoned.

Frémont now felt that he had kept well the promise he had made himself. The Klamaths had been punished severely for their treachery and he was ready to rest from the excitement of the day and to think of other matters. As he lay in his lodge Gillespie came in full of emotion at the stirring scenes he had witnessed. It was all new and strange to him. He was more than enthusiastic over the cool behavior of the man in the hour of danger. It was all so different from life aboard a man-of-war, so filled with unexpected and thrilling incidents. The Lieutenant, who shared Frémont's lodge, was so nervous and wrought up he could not sleep, and that night the two discussed future plans until near daybreak. In truth, there was little sleeping on the part of the men, whose sad experience a night or so previous had made them very wakeful. However, no attack occurred.

They made a late start the following day, traveling south along the lake. The Captain kept scouts out ahead as he was now fully aware of the dangerous character of the Klamaths. For two days they continued their march southward, each night erecting a corral for the horses and mules. At length they bade good-by to the lake and to their dead comrades. Frémont had exacted more than a life for a life, and the Indians could not boast of their night attack. It was not a pleasant story they had to hand down to their children of the lake region. They had discovered the punishment of the pale face to be swift and sure, particularly when such men as Frémont and Carson were concerned. Nevertheless none of the party underestimated the bravery and

daring of the Klamaths. They were the most courageous of any of the tribes with which they had come in contact. Even Kit Carson admitted this, and he had had a great deal of experience with the Blackfeet, who were noted for their prowess. But the Klamaths surpassed even the Blackfeet in boldness and determination.

The following day, while on the trail, the Captain chanced upon an arrow sticking in the ground to which was fastened a fresh scalp. Maxwell and Archambeau were riding ahead. That evening they said they had come upon an Indian, who at once laid down the bunch of young crows he was carrying, and let fly an arrow at Maxwell, which fortunately missed him. He sprang from his saddle and opened fire. In consequence the Indian met a sudden death, and his scalp was put on the trail to tell the story. As Frémont says, the men were getting "roughened into Indian customs."

The party was now in the Pit River country, and with the coming of spring all the flowers were in bloom. The hills wore a robe of emerald as far up as the timber line, and above the peaks, robed in snow, "glittered cool in their solitary heights." The men enjoyed traveling through a region fraught with such beauty, even though danger lurked at every turn. As an instance of the constant peril to which they were subjected it happened that they were descending the mountainside and entering a rocky canyon. All seemed quiet and peaceful when suddenly they were greeted by a flight of arrows. A large number of Indians were lying in ambush, waiting for them to come into the canyon. They

were promptly repulsed, leaving several of their party among the rocks. One of the braves refused to be dislodged and persisted in his efforts to score a hit, holding the men out of range for some minutes. Finally Carson crept around to a point where he could get a good view of the redskin and shot him through the heart. His bow and arrows were given to Gillespie as a keepsake. This was the last encounter with the Klamaths.

The party now crossed the mountains to the head of the lower Sacramento, where they entered a magnificent forest composed of cypress and white cedar. The elevation was four thousand six hundred feet. As they went on down the flanks of the mountain their way led through the same deep forest. The timber began to grow more open when they had descended a thousand feet, black oaks in full and beautiful leaf appearing among the pines. At noon they halted at an elevation of two thousand feet, where the flowers formed a perfect bower and the air was fragrant with the breath of the wildwoods. They soon reached the open valley of the Sacramento, and on the 24th of May again camped at Lassen's.

That evening Frémont wrote a guarded letter to Senator Benton, describing the attacks of the Indians and their apparent friendliness with the men of the Hudson Bay Company from whose fort on the Umpqua they obtained the materials for warfare, including tomahawks and iron arrowheads. He incidentally asked the Senator why the English should maintain a post on the Umpqua when the fur trade did not justify it. The Hudson Bay Com-

pany was no doubt instrumental in stirring up the Klamaths against the Frémont party. The Mexicans were also to blame for the hostility of this tribe. Of this there was no question.

The third Frémont expedition came to an end at Lassen's, though in his letter to Benton the Captain speaks of coming home "by the Colorado." It is evident that he was very uncertain as to his future course, meantime waiting to hear the news from the Rio Grande. On arriving at Sutter's he heard of the great change in the affairs of the country. The settlers had heard of Gillespie's arrival in the valley and his pursuit of Frémont. This led to many conjectures and they were all desirous of seeing the Captain return. There were rumors of war afloat and of hostile proceedings by Castro against the Americans. There was a general feeling that a crisis was at hand. In the meantime Frémont played a waiting game—waiting for the inevitable to happen.

CHAPTER VIII

The Conquest of California

The culmination of American resentment against Mexico came when General Castro issued his manifesto, or *banda*, on April 30th, which was sent to the various consuls warning all foreigners that any purchase of land they had made, or might make, would be regarded as null and void, and that they would be expelled from California territory any time the Mexican government should so choose. Such a drastic decree was the last straw, and the American settlers were thoroughly aroused by the injustice of the procedure. A council of war had been held in Monterey on April 11th and resolutions were adopted calling for stronger fortifications in the north and expressing fear of an invasion by an American Captain of the United States Army, Mr. Frémont, "which individual, though he has retired to the interior of the department of the north, we have, according to notices received, sufficient foundation to fear that his object is to strengthen and provide himself with a superior force capable of making resistance and carrying forward his views." These resolutions were signed by six prominent Mexican officials, including Castro, Vallejo, and Alvarado. It had become generally known that Castro had ordered Frémont to leave the country, and the Americans felt that it was only a matter of days when the same order would be issued to all others. The consternation following the General's proclamation can well be imagined.

When Frémont arrived in the valley he was called upon by the settlers and their families, who requested protection. At Neal's ranch he was informed that the Indians were leaving the valley and taking to the mountains, something that presaged immediate hostilities. A courier arrived from Sutter, reporting that two Californians had been sent by Castro among the several tribes to arouse them against the Americans. The Captain told the men who called upon him to take their wives and children home, as there would be no depredations by the Indians so long as he was in the valley. He had seen enough of Indian warfare to meet it with an iron hand.

It seems there were conflicting orders from Washington to the representatives of the government on the Coast. The Secretary of State instructed Consul Larkin to use all means to pacify the Californians and to obtain possession of the country in a peaceable way—as if this were possible—while the Secretary of the Navy ordered Commodore Sloat, on the declaration of war with Mexico, to raise the American flag at once and take possession of the territory. There was no one to represent the army except Frémont with such instructions as he had, mostly verbal, with the general order to use his own judgment. Despite the criticism that has been heaped upon the Captain for the part he played in the conquest of California, no one can say that his motives were not patriotic. His critics may accuse him of everything under the sun, but they cannot impugn his patriotism. And if the State of Califor-

nia were to do justice to Frémont there would be a dozen monuments to his memory within its borders. There seems to be a goodly supply of monuments to the Mexican Generals who opposed him. Being far from the seat of government, and with no opportunity for quick communication, his position was rendered most difficult, and it may be said that in all instances he acted for the best interests of his country.

After talking the matter over with Lieutenant Gillespie it was decided that he should go to San Francisco with a requisition upon Commander Montgomery of the sloop of war *Portsmouth*, lying at anchor in the harbor. The requisition called for the usual camp supplies, as they were without either bread or salt. Aside from this, Gillespie was to acquaint Montgomery with the instructions given him in Washington.

Neal, who had been on a visit to the coast settlement, returned in company with Samuel Hensley, a leading American settler, who told Frémont that he had recently met General Vallejo and was informed that in a convention of Mexican officials just held the proposition of separating from Mexico was discussed, but under the protection of some foreign power other than the United States. Hensley also stated that Captain Sutter had sent for a chief of one of the Indian tribes who acknowledged to him that Castro had promised the Indians great reward if they would burn the wheat crops of the Americans. It was the opinion of both Neal and Hensley that the American residents would be forced to fight or leave the country.

Frémont's geographical work being done he had ample time to think over the political situation and determine his future actions. In other words, he rested on his oars, waiting the turn of events and prepared to take advantage of any uncertainty that might arise by giving his country the benefit of the doubt. Both Neal and Hensley left Lassen's with the Captain for the purpose of calling the settlers together to provide measures for their common safety. Frémont's camp, wherever it might be, was named as the place of meeting for the Americans. He then sent Hensley to visit Doctor Marsh, who lived on the south side of the bay and was a man of unusual ability, particularly favorable to American interests. Among the Captain's men of action was one Ezekial Merritt, "rugged, fearless, and simple," who was made a sort of field lieutenant among the settlers. News reached Frémont that a band of horses had been gathered together in Sonoma and were to be driven to Castro. Merritt intercepted the horses, dispersed the guard and the vaqueros, and drove the animals into Fremont's camp. He then sent Merritt to Sonoma with instructions to surprise the garrison at that place.

On May 30th the Captain and his men marched south from Lassen's, establishing themselves at the "buttes of the Sacramento." This is an isolated mountain ridge about six miles long, with an elevation at its summit of over two thousand feet. They camped on a small creek on the southeastern side of the ridge. The mornings were pleasantly cool with a refreshing breeze, but as the day advanced the heat grew very intense. This is one of the warmest spots



RUINS OF GOVERNOR CASTRO'S FIRST HOUSE AT
MONTEREY

in the Sacramento Valley, but there was everything favorable to a camp—good water, fine grass, and plenty of game, which proved a delight to the Delawares. About this time Frémont named the entrance to San Francisco Bay *Chryso pylæ*, or Golden Gate. This name was put on the map for the first time in June, 1848. He also made some slight corrections in his observations and those of Captain Beechey relative to the coast line, which later involved him in a controversy with Captain Wilkes.

Frémont's camp at the "Buttes" became the rendezvous of the American settlers. Here they gathered to discuss affairs and exchange information. It was thought with the ripening of the grain, and from various reports, that the Indians were preparing to carry out Castro's scheme of setting fire to the fields, so the Captain decided to strike a blow that would make the redskins realize that Castro was far and that he was near. Accordingly, with an increased number of men, he stole quietly out one morning, following up the right bank of the river to the first of the rancherias, or villages, the Indians had along that stream. The scouts, who had been sent forward, reported that the Indians had feathers on their heads and that their faces were painted. From all appearances they were in the midst of their war ceremonies, and without a halt the party rode upon them, while they scattered in all directions, many of them taking to the river and swimming to the opposite bank. Without stopping, the men rode on to other villages, but their coming seemed to have been communicated in some strange way, for the inhabitants had vanished. They visited all

the rancherias during the day, driving the Indians out and upsetting their plans. The Captain says "this was a rude but necessary measure to prevent injury to the whites, and it had the effect that I intended."

On June 8th Frémont moved from the Buttes, occupying his old camp ground on the American River close to Sutter's. On the following day Gillespie arrived from San Francisco with supplies from the *Portsmouth*. By Lieutenant Hunter, who had charge of the launch conveying Gillespie to Sutter's landing, the Captain received a most cordial letter from Commander Montgomery. The ship's surgeon also came along to arrange Frémont's medicine chest and to render any assistance possible.

Meantime the settlers had decided to take matters into their own hands, though doubtless with suggestions from the Captain. At least the surprise visit to Sonoma was made under his orders, which were given to Merritt to carry out. Doctor Semple, editor of the first newspaper published in the territory, worked in conjunction with Merritt, and some thirty-three men were engaged in the capture of Sonoma. Their motto was "Equal rights and equal laws." They surrounded the home of General Vallejo in the morning before he was up. His arrest was a peaceful affair, as the General asked his captors to have a drink, which they did, and the most amicable relations existed.

Writing of this occurrence in the *Californian*, Doctor Semple says:

"However able may be the pen which shall record these events, none but those who have witnessed the

moderation and uniform deportment of the little garrison left at Sonoma can do them justice, for there has been no time in the history of the world where men without law, without officers, without the scratch of a pen as to the object in view, have acted with that degree of moderation and strict observance of persons and property as was witnessed on this occasion.”

The prisoners taken were General Vallejo, his brother, Colonel Salvador Vallejo, and his secretary, Colonel Prudon. General Vallejo afterward became an American citizen and possessed many sterling qualities. Together with the interpreter, Jacob Leese, they were taken to Frémont's camp, and Leese was there arrested by the Captain's order. As Frémont was not prepared to accept prisoners, the men were escorted to Sutter's Fort, of which Edward Kern was given charge, Sutter himself being an official of Mexico. On the 14th of June, 1846, the day that Sonoma was captured, some of the settlers who took part in that historic event got together and organized the "Republic of California." A man named Todd, thinking to make the occurrence more notable, made a flag of the white petticoat of Miss Anna Frisbie, then visiting in Sonoma. The design was that of a grizzly bear and the lettering was made of lampblack and pokeberry juice. Captain Ford suggested the insignia, and this gave to the emblem its name, "Bear Flag," which signalized the movement. The garrison at Sonoma was left in charge of William D. Ide, who issued a proclamation setting forth the objects of the "Bear Flag Party." The manifesto also men-

tioned the grievances of the settlers in being threatened with expulsion from the territory and the "enormous exactions on goods imported into the country." It also voiced opposition to a "government that had seized upon the property of the missions for its own aggrandizement."

As affairs had now reached the critical stage, Frémont decided to become personally responsible for anything that might occur. There was no telling what contingency might arise and in order not to place his government in an embarrassing position by any act of his he drew up his resignation from the army and forwarded it to Senator Benton and by him to be transmitted to the War Department should this become necessary. Thus the Captain placed himself on safe ground as an officer of the United States. Matters in California were in a somewhat chaotic condition, and as yet no word had reached Frémont that hostilities between this country and Mexico had really begun. The difficulty under which he was placed was the sixty or ninety days required to communicate with Washington. Relying on his own judgment he decided definitely to oppose the Mexican authorities, knowing that war would be the inevitable result. Senator Benton in his "Thirty Years" says:

"The verbal communications from the Secretary of State were that Mr. Frémont should watch and counteract any foreign scheme on California and conciliate the good will of the inhabitants toward the United States. . . . It was not to be supposed that Lieutenant Gillespie had been sent so far and through so many dangers merely to deliver a com-

mon letter of introduction on the shores of Klamath Lake.”

Captain Sutter was very much surprised when he learned that Frémont had sanctioned the actions of the Bear Flag Party in taking Vallejo prisoner, and no doubt this was communicated to the Captain, as Bidwell says some words passed between them and “Sutter came to me with tears in his eyes and said that Frémont had told him that he was a Mexican and that if he did not like what he was doing he would set him across the San Joaquin and he could go and join the Mexicans.” Soon afterward, however, this little tiff was forgotten and normal friendship resumed. It must be remembered that Frémont entertained a certain distrust of Sutter since he had sent a report of the Captain’s arrival in the territory to Micheltorena.

In answer to appeals from members of the Bear Flag Party Frémont took his men and proceeded to Sonoma, where he learned that the Americans under Captain Ford had just defeated a body of Californians led by Captain de la Torre of Castro’s forces and had liberated a number of American prisoners, among them being Todd, who had painted the Bear Flag.

During the course of the Sonoma occupation the Californians had captured two Americans named Cowie and Fowler, had tied them to trees, and after revolting cruelties had butchered them with knives. It is said that letters were purposely sent by Torre to be intercepted, thus allowing him to escape. At any rate the letters were intercepted and the bearers, Berryessa and de Haro, were shot in consequence.

Frémont mentions only one de Haro, but certain historians claim there were two brothers and that Kit Carson killed them. The Captain says that his scouts, mainly Delawares, influenced by the feeling of the settlers on account of the brutal murder, "made sharp retaliation." It is far more probable that the Delawares were to blame, as such an act was not at all in keeping with the character of the noted scout. At best it was an unfortunate occurrence.

On June 17th Castro put forth two proclamations, the first urging his countrymen to unite against the American settlers, and the second saying "all foreigners residing among us, occupied with their business, may rest assured of the protection of all authorities of the department, whilst they refrain entirely from all revolutionary movements." This was something of a change from the austere attitude he had formerly assumed.

Frémont was joined at Sonoma by Bidwell, and the Bear Flag was still flying from its mast. The Captain advised that the Americans organize at once. Now that he saw the movement was destined to endure he resolved to take an active part in its proceedings and use it to the benefit of the United States. He would take advantage of a fine opportunity. The meeting for organization having taken place it was necessary to issue a proclamation, and several were suggested but were thought too long. Gillespie acted as judge and finally accepted one of Bidwell's, which said: "The undersigned hereby agree to organize for the purpose of gaining and maintaining the independence of California." Bid-

well says that Frémont's remarks on that occasion "gave us no light on any phase of the situation. He neither averred nor denied that he was acting under orders from the United States government." However, he did say that unless the men should conduct themselves in a proper manner he would have nothing to do with the movement. Three companies were organized. The Captains were Henry L. Ford, Granville P. Swift, and S. J. Hensley. It may be said that Lieutenant Gillespie, special and confidential agent for California, was in complete accord with Frémont and coöperated with him. Of course he had received his instructions in Washington, and his readiness to assist the Captain shows that he was carrying out these instructions and was not a mere soldier of fortune. Some historians deprecate the Bear Flag movement, saying the men who fostered it were utterly irresponsible and treated the Mexicans unjustly. In brief, they accuse every American settler north of San Francisco Bay of being in a revolt that was unnecessary and essentially harmful, whereas the Bear Flag Party was organized by serious, high-minded, and patriotic Americans who were rightly concerned over the actions of the Mexican government and who did not intend to have their lands taken from them. It was well known by many of the settlers that the Mexican officials would stop at nothing when once aroused, and it behooved the Americans to look to their own interests and not take the Mexican's sense of equity for granted. The Bear Flag Party was organized for good and sufficient reasons, and even though a few of its members behaved in an unseemly manner at

times, it is nothing against the party as a whole. All organizations and all armies have their scape-goats. This cannot be avoided.

Misled by the intercepted letters Frémont meantime had gone after de la Torre, but he had made good his escape by taking a launch at Sausalito and crossing the bay. The Captain followed and obtained a boat from the master of the *Moscow*, lying at anchor at Sausalito, and with a company of twelve men crossed to Fort Point on the southern side of the entrance to San Francisco Bay. He had learned that the fort was garrisoned by very few and anticipated but little trouble in capturing it. On clambering up the sheer bluff in the gray of the morning a party of horsemen was seen leaving the fort in the direction of San Francisco. The post was deserted and its fourteen guns were promptly spiked by Stepp. With the retreat of de la Torre Mexican authority ceased in California north of San Francisco.

The complete organization of the Bear Flag Party at Sonoma was celebrated by a grand ball on the night of July 4th, when Frémont addressed the assembly briefly, mentioning the responsibility he had assumed as an officer of the United States Army and trusting to the settlers to do nothing which would discredit themselves or their country. He was given command of the two hundred and twenty-four men at Sonoma which, combined with his one hundred and sixty, made an armed force to be reckoned with. He felt that the existence of this small army was due to his presence in the valley, as it no doubt was.

Shortly after this meeting at Sonoma the Captain sent out parties for horses to mount the battalion and to bring in cattle for its support. Most of these animals were procured from General Vallejo's estate. They were afterward paid for by the United States government, as was also Captain Sutter for the use of his fort.

Commander Montgomery was in close touch with Frémont and in a letter congratulated him on his successful operations against the Mexicans, considering the capture of Sonoma "a master stroke." Although remaining neutral the Commander's sympathy was wholly with the Americans, so much so, indeed, that Castro complained to him of the *Portsmouth's* boats going around the bay "armed for the purpose of examining its trade."

On July 6th Frémont returned to his camp on the American Fork, leaving fifty men at Sonoma and taking with him some small fieldpieces from the fort. In the meantime Castro had left for San Juan, which mission was fortified with eight pieces of artillery. It was reported that he had a force of four hundred men. On the 10th the Captain was rejoiced to hear from Montgomery that Commodore Sloat had hoisted the flag of the United States on the Custom House at Monterey and that he, himself, had displayed the national emblem at San Francisco and had sent a flag to Sonoma. He requested Frémont to follow Sloat's example at Sutter's, and on the morning of July 11th, with a salute of twenty-one guns and amid the cheers of the people, the colors were flung to the breeze. On the 12th, the Captain received a letter from Sloat asking him

to come to Monterey as soon as possible, as if Castro should capitulate it was of the utmost importance that Frémont should be present. Moreover, Sloat was very anxious to gather a force of a hundred men or so to prevent the Indians from looting the farmers' houses.

As soon as he could make ready Frémont, with his original command, left for Monterey, going by way of the San Joaquin and crossing over to San Juan. Castro had gone on to Los Angeles, and the Captain took possession of San Juan, leaving but a few men in charge, as no further trouble from the north was anticipated. On the 19th the party continued through the Gomez Pass toward Monterey, giving a "marching salute" to Gavilan Peak, on which they had hoisted the flag a brief four months before. It was a day of excitement when they arrived at their destination. Several of the men had never before seen the ocean or had obtained a glimpse of the flag of England. Four American battleships lay in the harbor. There was also the *Collingwood*, an English man-of-war, carrying eighty-one guns and commanded by Rear Admiral Sir George Seymour. As an indication of the uncertain relations existing between the Americans and English, Frémont was told by Midshipman Beale that upon the appearance of the *Collingwood* all officers and men of the American ships who were ashore were recalled. On reaching his vessel, the *Congress*, he found the men at quarters. It is stated in a letter written by ex-Governor Rodman Price of New Jersey, who was an officer under Commodore Sloat, that the first thing Seymour said on meeting the American Com-

mander was, "Sloat, if your flag was not flying on shore I should have hoisted mine there." However, it was too late for that, as the United States had won the coveted prize.

The appearance of Frémont's men was in strong contrast to the natty dress of the officers and marines who filled the streets. Lieutenant Frederick Walpole of the *Collingwood*, in describing the entrance of the Captain, says:

"During our stay in Monterey Captain Frémont and his men arrived. They naturally excited curiosity. Here were true trappers, the class that produce the heroes of Fennimore Cooper's best works. These men had passed years in the wilds, living upon their own resources; they were a curious set. A vast cloud of dust first appeared and thence in long file emerged this wildest wild party. Frémont rode ahead, a spare, active looking man, with such an eye! He was dressed in a blouse and leggings and wore a felt hat. After him came five Delaware Indians, who were his bodyguard and have been with him through all his wanderings; they had charge of two baggage horses. The rest, many of them blacker than Indians, rode two and two, the rifle held by one hand across the pommel of the saddle. Thirty-nine of them are his original men; the rest are loafers picked up lately. His original men are principally backwoodsmen from the state of Tennessee and the upper waters of the Missouri. He has one or two with him who enjoy a high reputation on the prairies. Kit Carson is as well known there as 'the Duke' is in Europe. The dress of these men was principally a long loose coat of deerskin, tied

with thongs in front; trousers of the same, of their own manufacture which, when wet through, they take off and scrape well with a knife and put on as soon as dry; the saddles were of various fashions, though these and a large drove of horses and a brass field gun were things they had picked up about California. They are allowed no liquor—tea and sugar only; this no doubt has much to do with their good conduct; and the discipline, too, is very strict. They were marched up to an open space on the hills near the town under some large firs and there took up their quarters in messes of six or seven in the open air. The Indians lay beside their leader. One man, a doctor, six feet six high, was an odd looking fellow. May I never come under his hands.”

Lieutenant Wise, U. S. N., who saw Monterey about the time Frémont entered it, says, “The town—if it could be dignified by the title—we found a mean, irregular collection of mud huts and long, low adobe dwellings, strewn promiscuously over an easy slope down to the water’s edge.” Frémont says:

“I went into camp beyond the town, near the sea, on a flat among firs and pines toward the top of the ridge fronting the bay. This was a delightful spot. Before us to the right was the town of Monterey with its red-tiled roofs and large gardens enclosed by high adobe walls, capped with red tiles; to the left the view was over the ships in the bay and on over the ocean, where the July sun made the sea breeze and the shade of the pine trees grateful.”

Whatever the appearance of Monterey at that time it was always picturesque. There hung over it

the atmosphere of old Spain, of poetry and romance, something, despite its modern commercialism, it retains even to this day. The town presented an entirely different aspect than when Frémont visited it the January before under a Mexican passport. Three nations were now represented among the inhabitants, and the little village had a lively appearance. Between the Monterey of Frémont's time and of today many startling changes have occurred. The old Mexican adobes are now pointed out to tourists as curiosities, wedged in as they are between business blocks. Frémont street, down which the Captain and his men marched when they came into the town, is substantially paved and leads into the main business thoroughfare, which bears a Mexican name, and is usually crowded with automobiles and shoppers. The Custom House, where the flag of the United States was raised by Commodore Sloat, still stands in an excellent state of preservation—a silent witness of the evolution that has been going on. The old adobes, which have an historic interest, are jealously guarded, and none of importance have been disturbed.

The sun-browned frontiersmen with Frémont now entered into a period of absolute enjoyment. The officers and men from the warships in the harbor were frequent visitors to the camp and were much interested by the shooting done by the Delawares, who put up targets against the pines to test their marksmanship.

Immediately upon his arrival Frémont, accompanied by Lieutenant Gillespie, called on Commodore Sloat on board the *Savannah*. Sloat appeared

very much perturbed and after a few preliminary remarks said that he had applied to Gillespie, knowing him to be an agent of the government, for his authority in taking up arms against the Mexicans, but that he had refused to give it. He then asked Frémont by what instructions he had acted, by what authority he had opposed the government of Mexico. The Commodore fancied that his own action in hoisting the flag would be supported by some absolute written instructions from Washington to Frémont, and when he learned that the Captain had no written orders, but had acted on his own judgment, he was more than shocked. In truth he was amazed, dumfounded. He had expected Frémont to have acted under *written instructions* and would listen to no further explanation. Nor would the Captain argue the matter nor attempt to convince the Commodore that what he had done would meet with the approval of the government. Frémont was likewise surprised that Sloat should question the matter. Doubtless he had in mind the somewhat serious mistake of a United States officer, Commander Jones, who had formerly hoisted the flag in Monterey, only to be ordered to haul it down. The thought of this incident filled the Commodore with fear and foreboding. It struck Frémont as rather humorous that the Commander of a squadron should rely upon him to justify his action in hoisting the flag. The interview terminated abruptly, the Commodore appearing greatly concerned. It would seem that Sloat was not in a frame of mind to court hostilities, as on leaving Mazatlan on June 8th he had written to Secretary Ban-

croft that he would not take possession of California until he learned that one or the other of the nations had declared war, in spite of the fact that he had received from Consul Parrot a letter informing him that the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma had been fought. Under his instructions he did not feel justified in beginning hostilities, although it was very humiliating to him not to do so, as the world knew that the United States was at war with Mexico on the other coast. He was fearful lest he should exceed his orders and consequently had remained inactive. For this he received a reprimand from George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, which reads as follows:

U. S. NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, Aug. 13th, 1846.

COMMODORE:

The department has received your letter No. 51 of June 6th, from which it appears that while you were aware of the existence of "actual war" between the United States and Mexico you remained in a state of inactivity and did not carry out the instructions of June 24th, 1845, framed to be executed even in the event of the mere declaration of war, much more in the event of actual hostilities. These instructions you were ordered to carry out "at once."

In my letter of Aug. 5th, 1845, the receipt of which you acknowledged on the 28th of Jan., 1846, referring to them I said, "In the event of war you will obey the instructions recently addressed to you via Panama."

In my letter of October 17th, 1845, of which you acknowledged receipt on the 17th of March, 1846, referring to these instructions once more I said further: "In event of actual hostilities between the Mexican government and our own you will so dispose of your whole force

as to carry out most effectually the objects specified in the instructions forwarded to you from the department in view of such a contingency." And surely there was no ambiguity in this language. . . . The department willingly believes in the purity of your intentions. But your anxiety not to do wrong has led you into a most unfortunate and unwarranted inactivity.

Very respectfully yours,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

What is stranger still, Commodore Sloat, on entering the bay of Monterey June 2nd, sent an officer ashore to tender the usual civilities by offering to salute the Mexican flag. This proceeding puzzled his men, for they all knew that the Mexicans had begun an offensive against the United States troops on the Rio Grande and that our warships were blockading the coast of Mexico on the Gulf. Thus it will be seen that Frémont was really responsible for the raising of the flag by Sloat. Without the Captain's activity in the north there would have been no flag-raising in Monterey at that time, as the Commodore was determined to act only on written authority. He thought such instructions had been sent the Captain. Otherwise, he concluded, Frémont would not have dared oppose the Mexican authorities. But this officer well knew the wishes of the government in regard to California and was keen to take advantage of the opportunity that had presented itself to acquire the territory for his country. His very boldness was the inspiration of Commodore Sloat. In his admirable work, "Frémont and '49," Frederick S. Dellenbaugh says in reply to the criticism of certain historians on Frémont:

“Why, it may be asked, did it happen that Captain Frémont found himself, after a previous thorough reconnaissance, in California with sixty skilled marksmen, at the opportune moment, and with orders from Washington to act according to his best judgment?

“Frémont was playing a waiting game as far as he was able to do so. It was not possible for him to be definite under the circumstances, and he daily expected news of the beginning of war, which would have given him a free hand in coöperation with the navy, for the coöperation of the navy in the event of war was, of course, a foregone conclusion. Rumors of hostilities on the Rio Grande came through Indian sources, finally confirmed by Commodore Sloat. No specific instructions to coöperate were necessary to the officers, but Sloat proved to possess no initiative and exhibited a singular reluctance to act when the time came. The Bear Flag revolt was a spontaneous outgrowth of conditions which had been augmenting in California for a number of years. It was partly precipitated by Mexican orders issued on account of the nearness of the impending war, and it was, therefore, hardly as accidental at this time as Professor Royce assumes. Diplomats and leaders, who could not have prognosticated with some degree of exactness most of the events from the happenings of the last two or three years, would have been blockheads. Everything had been leading toward these events as surely as brooks from the mountains flow down to the master stream. There was no mystery about it all; but actions had to be shaped to immediate conditions.

There certainly is little ground for sneers concerning the efforts of a loyal American officer to find his duty and to do it to the best of his judgment and ability; on the contrary, his action should be commended, and I hope Frémont may be treated more generously in the future. Ridicule and contumely are, perhaps, entertaining, but they are neither criticism nor argument. Frémont may not always have done the best thing, but he did what his deliberate judgment dictated, and on the whole he did remarkably well."

The sight of the Stars and Stripes flying from its mast at the Custom House at Monterey amply repaid the Captain for all the suffering he had endured and all the dangers he had braved. He experienced a great sense of relief as well as satisfaction. There would be no turning back. The proclamation had gone forth that California was a possession of the United States and as such it would remain eternally. Nor was there any danger of a foreign power interfering. The coast line of this beautiful land was now the westernmost boundary of the American Republic.

On leaving the *Savannah* and its disgruntled commander, Frémont took a long walk to Point of Pines, the rocky headland forming the southern entrance to Monterey Bay, near Pacific Grove. Here he sat down and mused upon the recent stirring events in which he had been so actively concerned. Perhaps he little dreamed that in seventy-five years there would be vast farms in California and great, prosperous cities in whose harbors the ships of the seven seas would cast anchor, and close

to where he was then sitting hundreds of automobiles would pass each day in an almost continuous procession. The remarkable changes to take place in less than a century, when the air pilots winged their flight across desert lands where once the emigrant trains crawled slowly along, Frémont could not have visualized. He could picture a bright future for the new possession, but what it would become in a comparatively short space of time it was not possible for him to realize. He was highly elated with the outcome of affairs. His anxiety was over. The goal for which he had striven was reached. The conquest of California was complete. The consummation of his hopes had been fulfilled, and he could now rest with a contented mind here by the sea.

Sitting alone he drank in the marvelous beauty of Monterey Bay. The sky was a deep blue. A thin veil of haze dimmed the shoreline toward Santa Cruz. The invigorating breeze blew in fresh from the sea and stirred the colors that floated from the warships in the bay. The July sun riding above transformed the waters into innumerable sapphires and diamonds that danced and shimmered in the golden light like jewels on the neck of a queen. The breakers crowded and jostled each other among the rugged rocks of the point, fringing with snowy foam the narrow strip of beach and covering the jagged granite with robes of softest ermine. At times the billows lunged against the massive boulders with tremendous fury, sending the flying spume high into the air, while clouds of spray rose from the crest of the breakers and drifted land-

ward like smoke. Above this carnival of waves the sea gulls floated on motionless wings, or swept downward with delight into the hollows of the thundering seas. Black cormorants stood like sentinels on the tops of half-submerged ledges, and the cries of the waterfowl sounded faintly above the ocean's perpetual din. Here was the eternal wash of turbulent waters, the music and mystery of the sea to which Captain Frémont listened with a mind free from care and worry and hardships of toilsome journeys over the sun-scorched deserts and through the white ranges of the great Western wilderness.

CHAPTER IX

Commodore Stockton Takes Supreme Command

Following a few days of indecision Captain Frémont called on Commodore Stockton on board the *Congress*. He was second in command and Frémont told him of his interview with Sloat and of its unsatisfactory termination. Stockton ventured no comment, but requested the Captain to remain in the territory a while longer as in a few days he was to take command of the squadron himself, when he would decide on future operations. The next day Stockton addressed a letter to Sloat in which he advised the latter either to capture Castro or drive him out of the country. He also said that Frémont's men should be sent south to accomplish this and suggested further that Sloat would be relieved of all trouble should he assume command at once. This suggestion was evidently not received with favor, for Stockton was transferred to the *Cyane*, then lying in the harbor. Says Stockton:

"I then stated that it was very important that these Mexican officers should be driven out of the country or taken prisoners and requested him to place under my command the United States ship of war *Cyane*; he did so. Having then the command of all the forces on shore and the *Congress* and *Cyane*, I immediately sent word to Captain Frémont of what had occurred and to let him know that if he and Lieutenant Gillespie, with the men who were with them, would volunteer to serve

under my command as long as I was in command of the territory and desired their services, I would form a battalion and appoint Captain Frémont the Major and the Lieutenant a Captain and all the other necessary officers.”

In accepting Stockton's proposal Frémont deprived himself of the independent position he occupied as the head of a topographical party, but was more than willing to comply with the request, as were his men.

On July 29th Commodore Sloat sailed for home on the *Levant* with Commander Paige. Stockton then assumed entire command and appointed, as Alcalde of Monterey, the Reverend Walter Colton. The battalion under Frémont was soon ready to embark for San Diego on the *Cyane*, as but a few hours were required for the move. The camp was always in a condition for a quick departure. From the *Portsmouth's* store of supplies Frémont obtained some clothing for the men, sailor shirts of blue and white with collars bearing stars at the points. Few of the men wore buckskin as this was not a common dress among them. It was something of a trial for a number of the scouts to come under military discipline, as they had enjoyed a comparatively free existence, relying to a great extent on their own judgment in case of emergency. When told that Stockton felt authorized to pay them ten dollars a month for their services they were much amused, but said they would go anyway and would leave it to the government to decide what their remuneration should be. The greater part of the battalion was composed of hardened emigrants, men accustomed

to an open-air life and the hardships of roughing it. Moreover, they were very expert in the use of fire-arms and could easily defeat an enemy of twice their number under ordinary circumstances.

The battalion embarked on the warship *Cyane*, and owing to the season of the year the men anticipated a very pleasant trip, but the majority of them were horribly seasick, Carson being the most afflicted. He was a man of the mountain and the plain and was therefore a bad sailor. He was truly thankful when the ship entered the calm waters of San Diego Bay.

The battalion was received in a most friendly manner by one of the chief citizens, Don Juan Bandini, and by the Captain of the Port, Don Santiago Arguello. These two men, especially Bandini, proved very helpful to Frémont in getting horses and cattle from the surrounding country, with which Frémont was entirely unacquainted. Bandini was the father-in-law of Don Abel Stearns of Los Angeles, one of the most prominent Americans of the district. From the family of Bandini Frémont received many social attentions and was presented with a beautiful sorrel horse, well trained and fond of sugar. Frémont felt safe in relying on these gentlemen to support him in quietly obtaining possession of the country, authorizing Bandini to spread the news of his peaceful intentions among the Californians. To conciliate the people was his principal object. His march to Los Angeles was rendered very pleasant by the great amount of food provided for his men. There was no more starvation and no privations, but plenty of choice beef

and a wonderful variety of fruit. He found that Castro was camped on the mesa close to the town and that he had a force of about five hundred and sixty men and ten cannon. Commodore Stockton had told Frémont that he would join him in Los Angeles with a force of three hundred and sixty men and some artillery. The leader of the battalion confidently expected Castro to attack him before a junction could be made with Stockton. He had only one hundred and twenty men with him, but save for an occasional horseman nothing was seen of the enemy.

On August 13th Frémont joined Stockton and they entered Los Angeles unopposed. Their parade through the streets might be compared to that of a company of home guards rather than a force taking possession of a conquered town. In the meantime General Castro had abandoned his camp on the mesa, his men being dispersed over the country, while he took refuge in the mountains overlooking the San Gabriel plains. Various detachments were sent out to look for Castro's officers and bring them in, together with any Californians who may have become frightened and left the town. The Governor, Don Pio Pico, had gone to his country place on the coast some forty miles to the south. Frémont wrote him a letter, inviting him to return to Los Angeles and assuring him there would be full protection for both himself and his property. Although the invitation was not accepted at once, the letter led to very friendly relations between the commander of the battalion and Pico's brother, Don Andres.

On the 17th Stockton issued a proclamation, treating California as a territorial possession of the United States. He occupied himself with creating a civil government and in forming such regulations as would best preserve order. He divided the territory into three districts. Before sailing for the southern coast of Mexico he wrote to Frémont saying that on the 25th of the month he would meet him in San Francisco and would appoint him military Governor of the territory and Gillespie Commandant of the Southern district, with headquarters at Los Angeles. Despite the existence of martial law the civil officers of the country were permitted to proceed with the usual exercise of their functions and were not to be disturbed save in exceptional cases requiring military authority. The orders making Frémont military Governor, together with others, were to be forwarded to Secretary Bancroft, and the man chosen to deliver them was none other than Kit Carson. The noted scout was to go direct to Senator Benton, who would personally introduce him to the President and the Secretary of the Navy. It would be rather an event in Carson's career and one which he entered upon with enthusiasm. On the way he would have the opportunity of visiting his family at Taos, New Mexico. It was planned that he should go by the Virgin River trail through Mexican territory where the Indians were both numerous and dangerous. Frémont was greatly pleased to have Carson the bearer of the messages as he would convey by word of mouth many details not possible otherwise. He would be warmly welcomed by Mrs. Frémont, to whom he would impart

many interesting things in regard to the experiences and adventures of her husband. This trip of Carson's to Washington, however, had an unfortunate termination of which more will be said later.

Commodore Stockton began his preparations for the voyage to Mexico, requesting Frémont to go into the Sacramento Valley and try to get enough men to bring the force of the battalion up to three hundred. At the same time he wished him to ascertain how many would join him in an expedition against Mexico. In September Frémont left Los Angeles with thirty-five men and followed up the coast, enjoying the beautiful scenery and the equally charming weather.

In the meantime things were occurring elsewhere that had a direct bearing on the California situation. On June 3rd, 1846, General Kearny received orders to cross the plains and take possession of both California and New Mexico. He was the first regular army officer to enter this territory, Frémont having been attached to the Topographical Corps. At that time the Governor of New Mexico was Armijo, who has been described as a brute and a coward and who had treated the Texans in the most cruel manner. Salezar, his chief general, was a man of the same stripe as was Colonel Archuleta, who was in for fighting the Americans. Diplomacy interfered, however. A certain James Magoffin, first United States Consul at Chihuahua, had been sent by the Washington authorities to prevent bloodshed by negotiations. It is said the east bank of the Rio Grande was as far as the American advance was to go, and on this understanding the Mexicans consented to

make no attack on the United States troops. General Kearny did not seem to understand the situation and on August 18th, 1846, he entered the town of Santa Fé unopposed and took up his headquarters in the "Palace," proclaiming the annexation of all of New Mexico. Armijo lost no time in making his departure, fearing his own people as well as the enemy, and Kearny proceeded to organize a government, after which, with his force of dragoons, he set out for California.

Meanwhile Frémont was traveling north, where, in the Salinas Valley, he encountered a number of grizzly bears, both young and old. They afforded a strenuous time for the party while they lasted. One immense grizzly caused considerable commotion. He was on the opposite bank of the river and on being shot at, retreated into a willow grove. Dick Owens, William Knight (of Knight's Ferry) and Frémont went in pursuit. They were moving cautiously through the clumps of willows, when in passing a thicket Knight heard the bear right at his heels, and wheeling about he fired at the animal with his double-barreled gun when not over ten feet away, killing it instantly. Knight, who was a settler, served under Frémont as scout and hunter.

Late in the month they reached the Sacramento Valley. In his twelve weeks' absence Frémont noted many changes. There was no more talk of Indian uprisings and new settlers were flocking in by the score. New homes were being built, new farms were under cultivation, and the general development of the country was proceeding rapidly. Upon inquiry it was found that it would be impossible to recruit

men for Stockton's proposed expedition into Mexico. The incoming settlers were pretty well satisfied with their present condition. They were not at all anxious to fight except to protect themselves and their country and could see no especial reason for going to Mexico. Moreover, they were getting homes for themselves in the new territory, which they did not care to leave. This information had no more than reached Stockton when reports came to him that an insurrection had broken out in Southern California, where a Mexican Captain, José Maria Flores, aided by other Mexican officers, had started a revolution.

Gillespie was besieged in the government building in Los Angeles. The Commodore ordered Frémont to come immediately to San Francisco with as many men and horses as he could get for the southern part of the territory which had been placed under martial law. In doing so he had acted with little or no knowledge of the customs or the habits of the Californians, who were essentially a free people, not subject to regulations or exactions. They regarded the new order of things as very oppressive, as it robbed them of that personal liberty to which they had always been used. They were a careless and pleasure-loving people given to social enjoyment, no restrictions of any kind having been placed upon them. Naturally this martial law, prohibiting many things to which they had been accustomed, was exceedingly annoying. They resented it from the start. Therefore it took but little encouragement and agitation and an energetic leader for them to rebel. Among the various regu-

lations inaugurated by Commodore Stockton, who was given to the strict discipline of life aboard a man-of-war, were two especially obnoxious to the Californians. One of these called for a permit from Gillespie for any one who wished to be out of the house before sunrise; the other required a written order before a person was permitted to carry firearms. All these exactions were foreign to the people. They could not understand what it all meant. Such regulations were ill adapted under the circumstances.

“In the same spirit afterward were the arbitrary exactions, amounting to confiscation, rigorously enforced against them by the government in regard to the lands, which were absolutely their sole means of existence,” writes Frémont. “All this regardless of the usages and tenure of a century. The promises of our government, while the object was to conciliate and disarm any hostile feeling of the people, were full of good will and consideration, but their acts, when they had acquired the power to act, were not only ill judged and ill adapted to the interests of these people, but arbitrary and oppressive, and while apparently only in the exercise of rights which they had purchased, singularly inequitable and false in the highest degree to their promises and treaty obligations.”

To bring Frémont and his men to San Francisco the Commodore sent a fleet of small boats under command of Midshipman Edward Beale, who wrote a very humorous account of his experiences among the sloughs and bullrushes of the lower Sacramento. Young Beale became a fast friend of Frémont—a

friendship that continued for over forty years. The Commander of the Battalion reported to Stockton the following morning that he had obtained the services of one hundred and seventy men, well armed and with equipment to mount as many horses when these animals could be found. The command went aboard the ship *Sterling*, bound for Santa Barbara, in the hope of springing a surprise on the enemy. At the same time Stockton ordered Captain Mervine of the *Savannah*, then lying in Monterey Bay, to proceed direct to San Pedro in order to give support to the little garrison supposed to be in Los Angeles. Between San Francisco and Monterey the Commodore spoke the merchant vessel *Barnstable*, and was given a dispatch from Captain Maddox informing him that an attack on Monterey was anticipated and asking immediate aid. Stockton steered the *Congress* into Monterey Bay, where he strengthened the garrison there by an additional fifty men. He then continued down the coast, touching at Santa Barbara to find if Frémont in his sailing vessel had been able to surprise the town. Not finding the *Sterling* there he went on to San Pedro, where he found the *Savannah*.

Captain Gillespie on his capitulation at Los Angeles had taken his garrison to San Pedro, where the merchant ship *Vandalia* was lying at anchor. Captain Mervine, acting under orders, took a part of his men, together with Gillespie's, and attempted to force his way to Los Angeles. Not having any artillery with him he was met and defeated by a party of Californians, who were well equipped and well mounted, his force being on foot. In the engagement

Mervine had four men killed and several wounded. He was compelled to retreat to his ship. The Californians handled their one fieldpiece with telling effect, always keeping just beyond the range of the American guns. When the bullets began to come too close they would lasso their cannon and drag it to a safe distance, when they would again open fire. By this means they were able to harass the advancing troops and make their march unendurable. Commodore Stockton was very much displeased with this incident as he felt it would give great encouragement to the Californians.

Having learned from the *Vandalia* of what had happened to Mervine and of conditions in the south, Frémont left Santa Barbara for Monterey in the hope of obtaining horses in that region. While in Monterey on the 27th of October he learned that he had been appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of a Rifle Regiment in the army of the United States. His commission was dated May 29th and was signed by President Polk. It must be remembered that such rapid advancement, vaulting over the heads of so many West Point men, may have had something to do with the unfortunate occurrence afterward, when we consider the grounds on which it was based.

Meantime Stockton landed a force at San Pedro, and, although there was some desultory firing by the Californians, he once more hoisted the flag and proceeded to garrison the town. There were daily skirmishes and the Commodore's patience was well nigh exhausted in waiting for Frémont. Stockton would not undertake the march to Los Angeles as

Mervine's experience was enough to teach him the folly of putting infantry against cavalry. Leaving the *Savannah* to look out for Frémont, the Commodore set sail for San Diego, where Lieutenant Minor was in command. The Lieutenant had reported the town was besieged by Californians, men and provisions being required for the garrison. Captain Gillespie was ordered ashore with supplies and that portion of the battalion which had been at Los Angeles.

At the request of Lieutenant Minor, Captain Gibson was sent with a party to a number of ranches near the coast, where Señor Bandini said he thought some horses were obtainable. Meanwhile, Colonel Frémont had written to Commodore Stockton informing him of the cause of his delay. The Commodore returned to San Pedro and sent the *Savannah* to Monterey to aid Frémont in getting away. Returning to San Diego he managed to cross the bar into the harbor, where his ship would be protected from the occasional windstorms. Captain Gibson arrived with some cattle and horses, but the latter were in such poor condition that it would take a number of weeks to get them fit for service.

The day Stockton arrived in San Diego the Californians made an attack on the town, but were forced out with the loss of two men and several wounded. While there the Commodore found that his wily enemy had driven off every horse within fifty miles of the town. It then occurred to Stockton to send a vessel down the coast to Lower California, where the news of hostilities had not, in all probability, reached the ears of the ranchers and



—Photo by Robinson, Merced.

PENDOLA BUILDING

Bear Valley, on Frémont's Mariposa Grant, in 1856.



—Photo by Robinson, Merced.

OSO HOUSE

Bear Valley, Mariposa, 1856. A well-known hotel in Frémont's time.

there to recruit the necessary animals. Accordingly he sent the merchant ship *Stonington*, with Captain Hensley and Company B of the battalion, to voyage down the coast on this mission, which was so essential to the march on Los Angeles. The men in San Diego busied themselves in making the required equipment. Stockton then learned from two men who came in from the enemy's camp at San Bernardo that it was composed of about fifty soldiers, therefore Captain Gillespie was ordered to take as many men as could be provided with horses and one fieldpiece and make an attempt to surprise the Californians. During the day in which preparations were being made for the start an English resident of California entered San Diego, carrying a note to the Commodore from General Kearny, who had just reached the border of the territory after a weary march across the desert. The letter was sent from Warner's ranch, where a pass led through the mountains. Kearny told Stockton that he had stopped in New Mexico, which he had "annexed" to the United States and "established a civil government, securing order, peace, and quietness there." He further informed the Commodore that the "express by Mr. Carson was met on the Del Norte and must have reached Washington ten days since." As the letter called for immediate aid Stockton in reply stated that he was sending Captain Gillespie with a party of mounted men and one fieldpiece to his camp, Gillespie's command being prepared, left at once. He had twenty-six men from the battalion of Captain Gibson, with a detachment of ten carbineers and a brass "four-pounder" from the *Con-*

gress, manned by Acting Lieutenant Beale and Midshipman Duncan. Alexis Godey had been made a Lieutenant and was among the men from the battalion, his familiarity with the country and long experience making him a man of inestimable value.

Captain Gillespie left San Diego about seven o'clock in the morning. His command numbered in all about fifty men—all the force available with horses. The third day out he met General Kearny in the mountains between Santa Maria and Santa Ysabel. Though his company was small, it proved a valuable addition to Kearny's hundred men. The General, on being told of the position of the Californians, decided to attack them as soon as possible. That evening camp was made at San Pascual and Lieutenant Hammond was sent out to reconnoiter. This officer was unfortunately discovered. When Kearny was told of this he was determined to make an attack at daylight, though some of his men were opposed to the plan. At two o'clock in the morning the call to saddle was sounded and after a march of nine miles through mud and rain they met the enemy at the Indian village of San Pascual. Lieutenant Johnson led the advance with twelve mounted dragoons; General Kearny and staff followed. Behind came Captain Moore and Lieutenant Hammond with fifty dragoons mounted on worn-out mules and fatigued horses. Then came Gillespie and his portion of the battalion, Lieutenant Davidson with two howitzers and Major Swords with the remaining dragoons. It was evident that Kearny anticipated an easy victory, as he had a sort of contempt for the Mexicans in general, and while he

had the advantage in point of numbers, his men were tired and weary and were not well mounted. Without taking time to rest, and with his animals thin and footsore, he should not have given battle to the enemy on this particular day. Moreover, he was not accustomed to the tactics of the fighting Californians.

Johnson charged the enemy at once, followed by Moore. There was a hand-to-hand encounter, then the Californians resorted to a strategem practiced by them very successfully on similar occasions. They turned and galloped off, then when the Americans were no longer in compact formation, they would wheel about and renew the attack with the lances with which they were armed. The dragoons were poorly equipped to meet these renewed onslaughts, as they had emptied their guns in the beginning of the fight. Captain Moore was wounded and dismounted at the start, but managed to remount, when he rushed at Pico, who was armed with a lance, breaking his sword blade close to the hilt. He was instantly killed by another Californian. Moore's brother-in-law, Lieutenant Hammond, seeing his predicament, rushed to his assistance, but was caught by another lance and received a fatal wound. General Kearny, who was directly responsible for this slaughter, was wounded as was Lieutenant Gillespie. It was a wonder that Gillespie was not killed outright, but the Mexican with whom he fought was too anxious to get his silver-mounted saddle and spared him. The mules hitched to a howitzer ran away with it, landing in the enemy's ranks where they were captured and the

man in charge killed. The gun remained in the possession of the Californians.

The battle was of short duration, but the enemy, by completely surrounding the Americans, who were on a hill, rendered any further progress impossible. Word must be sent to Stockton for reënforcements, but who was to carry the message? Every avenue of escape was closely guarded. Stockton was the only hope. Some way must be devised for letting him know of Kearny's plight. The following extract from a speech of Senator Benton pictures very vividly this thrilling and dramatic episode:

"The four days' siege of the hill was the period of interesting events, which it was the duty of the General to have told, and which he suppressed to keep up his assumed character of victor. First, there was the capture of the generous and daring Godey with his two companions, in full view of Kearny's camp, after his adventurous run to San Diego of forty miles to get aid for Kearny; and rapidly returning with the tidings that it was coming—tidings which he could not deliver, because he was captured in view of Kearny by his besiegers. The fact had to be suppressed or the elusive cry of victory was at an end. It was suppressed—not noticed in the official report. Then there was the chivalry of Don Andres Pico. He treated the captured men with the utmost kindness—Godey as a brother. He inquired for the killed and especially for Gillespie. Godey told him he was not dead, but badly lanced and that his servant in San Diego had made up some supplies for him which he had brought. Pico put

the supplies under a flag and sent them to Gillespie with an invitation to come to his camp. . . . The same flag carried a proposition to exchange prisoners. Kearny saw in this only a trick and a lure to perfidy. He was afraid to meet the flag. None of those for whom he reserved the honors of his report to the government would venture to go. There was a lad present—one of those sent out by Stockton, a midshipman, his name, Beale. This lad volunteered to go and hear the proposition of exchange.”

After the preliminaries had been arranged young Beale entered into a parley with the enemy. Pico had three American prisoners and Kearny one Californian. Pico offered to exchange man for man. Beale was anxious to redeem Godey and described him, but Pico refused to give him up, asking Beale to name another. Then a man named Burgess was mentioned and Pico agreed to exchange him for the one Californian held by Kearny. Taking heart, the General sent out Captain Emory to consummate the exchange, who took all the credit to himself, omitting all mention of Beale in his report. Nor did Kearny in his report speak of the honorable conduct of Beale and Pico. Burgess, the man Pico exchanged, could tell nothing of the mission of Godey to San Diego as the secret of obtaining aid from Stockton rested with Godey, who was still a prisoner.

Finally the Americans, pressed by lack of food, became restless and demanded to be sent forward. Kearny gave the order to move and the command started. Pico, ever watchful, sent his lancers to

head them off. Then Kearny halted his column and consulted his officers. To advance was an utter impossibility. What was to be done? Stockton was some forty miles distant. To send him another message seemed hopeless as the Mexicans watched day and night for any messenger that might be sent out. The situation was desperate and called for a hero. One was provided in the person of Acting Lieutenant Beale, who volunteered to take a message to Stockton. When asked who he would like to have accompany him Beale said he would prefer Kit Carson and his Indian servant. At last Kearny agreed to let Carson go. They had only mule meat to eat and each was provided with a rifle, revolver and a sharp knife. Night came and the time for the departure of the trio arrived. We will let Senator Benton continue the narrative:

“The moment arrived for descending the hill and clearing the open valley, two miles to the nearest cover. It was a perilous descent for at the approach of night it was the custom of Pico to draw a double chain of sentinels around the hill and to patrol the valley with mounted lancers—precautions more vigilantly enforced since he learned from the captured men that Carson was on the hill. ‘Be on the alert,’ he said to his men, ‘Carson is there,’ and applying to Kearny’s command one of the figurative expressions so common in the Spanish language, *se escapará el lobo*, the wolf will escape the hunters if you do not watch him closely. The descent was painful and perilous, all done by crawling, for the upright figure of a man could not be exhibited where the horizon was watched for all that appeared

above it. Shoes were pulled off to avoid cracking a stick or making a sound, which the ear of the listener pressed upon the ground could catch, and the naked feet were exposed to the prickly pear. They passed between sentinels, waiting and watching their time to move an inch. They heard them whisper and smelled the smoke of their cigarettes. At one time Beale thought it was all over with them. Pressing Carson's thigh to get his attention and putting his mouth to his ear he whispered, 'We are gone. Let us jump and fight it out!' Carson said, 'No, I've been in worse places before and Providence saved me.' His religious reliance inspired the sinking hopes of Beale. The hill cleared, two miles of prairie in the open valley, all covered with prickly pears, remained to be crawled over, for no one could stand upright without detection, where the mounted vedette and the horizontal view of the recumbent sentinel observed every object that rose above the level plain. Clear of the valley and gaining the first woods they traveled all night without shoes, having lost them in the dark. Rocks, stones, pebbles, prickly pears—these of exuberant growth—were their carpet. At daylight they took the gorge of a mountain and laid by, for movement by day was impossible to them; the country was on the alert, animated to the highest degree by the success over Kearny and all on the search for the fugitives. At nightfall the expedition was resumed and within twelve miles of San Diego the three adventurers separated, each to take his chance of getting in and thus multiply chances for getting relief to Kearny, for San Diego was also surrounded and invested

and Stockton had not a horse (having sent them all to Kearny) to scour the country a furlong in front of his infantry pickets. The Indian got in first, Beale next and Carson third, all in a state of utter exhaustion; and Beale only getting into town by the help of the picket guard who carried him, and with injuries from which he has not yet recovered. They found Stockton's relief in the act of setting out."

Aside from Beale, who was badly used up, Carson was unable to walk for several days afterwards. Stockton sent two hundred and fifteen men under Lieutenant Gray to Kearny's relief and the next day the whole command arrived in San Diego. The General and his staff were cordially received and given the best quarters the town afforded. Meanwhile, however, the Commodore was more than surprised to learn that Carson was with Kearny when he had thought him in Washington or on the way. As to why the famous scout was with Kearny is best told in his own words:

"I met General Kearny with his troops on the 6th of October below Santa Fé. I had heard before of their coming and when I met them the first thing I told them was that they were too late—that California was conquered and the United States flag raised in all parts of the country. But General Kearny said that he would go on; and said something about going to establish a civil government. I told him that a civil government was already established and Colonel Frémont appointed Governor, to commence as soon as he returned from the north some time in that very month. General Kearny said

that made no difference; that he was a friend of Colonel Frémont and he would make him Governor himself. He began from the first to insist on my turning back to guide him into California. I told him I could not turn back—that I had pledged myself to Commodore Stockton and Colonel Frémont to take their dispatches through to Washington and to return with them as far as New Mexico where my family lived and to carry them all the way back if I did not find some one at Santa Fé that I could trust as well as myself; that I had promised that I would reach Washington in sixty days and that they should have return dispatches in one hundred and twenty days. I had performed so much of the journey in the appointed time and, in doing so had already worn out and killed thirty-four mules; that Frémont and Stockton had given me letters of credit to persons on the way to furnish me with all the animals I needed; that I was pledged to them and could not disappoint them and, besides, that I was under more obligations to Colonel Frémont than to any man alive. General Kearny would not hear to any such thing as to my going on. He told me that he was a friend of the Colonel and Senator Benton and would send on the dispatches by Mr. Fitzpatrick, who had been with Mr. Frémont in his exploring party and was a good friend to him and would take the dispatches through and bring them back as fast as I could. When he could not persuade me to turn back, he then told me he had the right to make me go with him and insisted on his right and I did not consent to turn back till he had made me believe that

he had the right to order me; and then as Mr. Fitzpatrick was going on with the dispatches and General Kearny seemed to be such a friend of the Colonel I let him take me back; and I guided him through, but with great hesitation, and prepared everything to escape in the night before they started and made known my intentions to Maxwell, who urged me not to do so. More than twenty times on the road General Kearny told me about his being a friend of Colonel Frémont and that he intended to make Colonel Frémont the Governor of California, and all this of his own accord as we were traveling along, or in camp, and without my asking a word about it. This statement I make at the request of Senator Benton, but had much rather be examined in a court of justice, face to face with General Kearny, and there tell at once all that I know about General Kearny's battles and his conduct in California."

While Fitzpatrick was a man who could be trusted to deliver the dispatches, it is evident that he could not give the verbal information as Carson would have done, to whom many things had been told. All Fitzpatrick could do was to act as dispatch bearer, which he did as well as any other man. It was presumptuous in General Kearny to turn back one who had been specially commissioned by a high authority to perform a certain act. This made the Colonel and the Commodore very angry and was really the beginning of their trouble with Kearny. Frémont in his "Memoirs" calls attention to the General's note written from Warner's in which he said he had merely met Car-

son, but refrained from stating the facts. The Colonel termed this duplicity, saying that "it showed, with the clearness of light, the quality which was at the root of his character—a falseness which contaminated every other quality."

A few hours after General Kearny's arrival at San Diego Commodore Stockton offered to make him commander-in-chief over his entire force. Kearny declined, saying that the force was Stockton's and that he would go as his aide-de-camp. The same offer was made in the presence of several other officers a few days later, but was again refused. It is evident that Stockton wished Kearny to know that he was perfectly willing to yield to him the right to command and to place all power in his hands. Afterward the General intimated to Stockton that under his instructions he felt that he should be Governor of California. It was then that the Commodore reminded the General that on several occasions he had offered to let him take complete charge of matters in California. Kearny relied on his instructions and Stockton said that his own instructions were to the effect that "should you conquer the country you will establish a civil government." He had done all this and had appointed Colonel Frémont the Governor and Captain Gillespie the Secretary. The two argued the question of instructions in a good-natured manner, but the stand taken by Commodore Stockton was evidently displeasing to Kearny, though he said nothing at the time.

Late in December Captain Hensley, who had made the trip south in the *Stonington* in quest of

animals, arrived by land with a convoy of cattle and horses, which he contrived to get into San Diego in spite of the bands of insurgents in the vicinity. He had disembarked at San Diego, many miles down the coast of Lower California. Two boats were swamped with the loss of some supplies. He gathered together about one hundred and fifty horses and mules and three hundred cattle, all obtained through the kindness of Señor Bandini. The arrival of these animals enabled Commodore Stockton to make preparations for his march on Los Angeles. After an exchange of letters between the Commodore and the General, in which each attempted to advise the other, the hour arrived for beginning the march to San Luis Rey. As Stockton was about to mount his horse Kearny approached and asked him who was to command the troops. The Commodore told him that Lieutenant Rowan of the *Cyane* was in command. Kearny said that he would like to command the troops himself, whereupon in the presence of other officers, Stockton stated that he would make Kearny the commander under him, he to remain Commander-in-Chief. Everything being settled satisfactorily the troops took up their march to San Luis Rey, which is about forty miles from San Diego.

During this time Colonel Frémont was busy in Monterey trying to provide equipment for his battalion. About this time there was an Indian scare in Northern California. It was reported that a thousand Indians of the Walla Walla tribe were on their way to attack Sutter's Fort. The Colonel had a part of his battalion recruited but thought

the rumors of an Indian invasion greatly exaggerated. Taking three men with him he called upon the leaders of the Walla Wallas and they proceeded to tell him of their wrongs. They said they had been robbed and that the whites had killed one of their best young men. Frémont told them that he was to go south at once, but in the spring he would meet them at a place agreed upon and would see that justice was done. In the meanwhile he advised them to go hunting and not to think of attacking the fort. It seems that they were so pleased with the Colonel's talk that they gave him ten of their number for his battalion.

It happened that the winter was unusually severe. There was a deep fall of snow in the Sierras, which barred all the passes to travel. It was during this season that a terrible fate befell the Donner Party near the head of the Truckee. There were prolonged periods of rain and wind, and traveling was made very arduous. Colonel Frémont sent for his horses in the Sacramento Valley. He appointed William H. Russell to go there for the purpose of enlisting men, a mission for which he was well fitted. The Colonel was aided in his work in and around Monterey by the young secretary of Consul Larkin, William Swasey, who was made assistant commissary of subsistence. The northern section of the territory was very quiet. It was in the south where trouble continued. Flores had appointed Don Manuel Castro, former Prefect of Monterey, Commander-in-Chief in the north, with Don Francisco Rico and Don Jesus Pico as his lieutenants. Flores's plan was to restrict the American

forces to the seaports, the Californians controlling the interior, thus leaving the matter of boundaries to be decided by negotiation between the two countries at the close of the war. Against the naval force alone, no doubt, his plan would have met with success for a long time, but he had not counted on Frémont's battalion of some five hundred marksmen.

Governor Alvarado at Monterey had kept his parole as had several other prominent Mexicans. One of the most influential Californians in the north, Don Pablo Noriega, had been imprisoned without cause in order to restrict his influence as he was too sensible to imagine the forces of Castro would meet with anything but defeat. Frémont had heard nothing of Castro's movements though he expected him to strike in some unguarded spot almost any time. The Colonel did not have to wait long. Two men from the San Juan Valley came into Monterey and reported that Charles Burroughs had arrived there with thirty-five horses from the Sacramento and was followed by a party of about the same size. The arrival of these parties was at once made known to Castro who was coming from Soledad. A night or two before his scouts had found Consul Larkin at the home of Don Joaquin Gomez at the foot of Gavilan Peak. The Consul was on his way to San Francisco, but was captured and taken to Castro's camp. Learning of Larkin's plight Burroughs sent a party of ten into the Salinas Valley to reconnoiter. Six of them were Walla Walla Indians and two were Delawares from the Columbia. Meanwhile Castro had his scouts out in

order to be instantly advised of any move by either Burroughs or Frémont. During the day they came upon the scouts of Burroughs, two of whom rode back to tell him of the approach of the Californians, while the eight remaining retreated to a grove of young oaks covering a strip of lowland. The Californians numbered one hundred and thirty men and for a full hour the eight men in the grove held them at bay. Mr. Larkin, who was present at the unequal battle, in writing of it says that he "was requested several times, then commanded, to go among the oaks and bring out his countrymen and offer them their lives on giving up their rifles and persons." At length he offered to go, but on one condition: the men were to retain their arms and be sent either to San Juan or to Monterey. On refusal the commanding officer was told to go himself, which he attempted to do by crawling through the grass, but he received a bullet in his body and was carried off on a horse by one of his men. Before the scouts were routed out of the oaks, Burroughs arrived with fifty troopers and made a disorderly charge. He was mounted on Frémont's pet horse, Sacramento, and early in the fray Captain Burroughs was shot, but Sacramento wheeled about suddenly from an attempt to seize him and carried the fatally wounded rider back to his own lines. The fight was over in half an hour, the Californians dispersing in small bands until the Americans were the sole occupants of the field. They had lost Captain Burroughs and two other men, while several were wounded. The Castro forces lost three men and had seven wounded.

The following morning Frémont marched out of Monterey to San Juan after scouring the country for Castro's scattered bands, but they were well out of the way. In San Juan Frémont awaited reënforcements from the Sacramento and prepared for the trip to Los Angeles. The men of his battalion were anxious to be on the way. They were mostly emigrants hardened by rough knocks to an adventurous life in the open and splendid rifle shots. It would be very difficult today to gather together five hundred such fighters as composed the California Battalion. Never again will the Far West see such an organization of sharpshooters. The backbone of the battalion was the fifty or more men of Frémont's third expedition to whom, it will be remembered, rifles were given for hitting the bull's-eye. The dress of the men is described by one of the officers, Edwin Bryant, in his book, "What I Saw in California":

"A broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat, a shirt of blue flannel, or buckskin, with pantaloons and moccasins of the same, all generally worse for wear and smeared with mud or dust, make up the costume of the party, officers as well as men. A leathern girdle surrounds the waist, from which are suspended a bowie and a hunter's knife and sometimes a brace of pistols. These with the rifle and holster pistols are the arms carried by officers and privates. A single bugle (a sorry one) composes the band."

Frémont from his long experience on the plains and in the mountains always saw that he was never placed at such a disadvantage as Kearny at San Pascual. In choosing his camp sites he always saw

that the advantage of ground was on his side. Lieutenant Louis McLane, who was afterwards United States Minister to France, volunteered for the battalion and was sent to Gilroy with the artillery, where he busied himself in mounting it.

On his way up the coast from Los Angeles the Colonel had left ten men at Santa Barbara. This was done at the request of the citizens in case some trouble occurred. The small party was in charge of Theodore Talbot, a young man, who had been with Frémont on two different expeditions, and who was afterward a Lieutenant in the United States Army. It seems that some of the women of Santa Barbara gave Mr. Talbot a hint of impending danger, advising him and his men to escape while there was yet time. As this advice was not heeded the women offered to conceal them. But this looked too much like cowardice and they continued to remain until Flores, at the head of one hundred and fifty men, summoned them to surrender with a promise they should be paroled. They were given but two hours to decide the matter, which they did by leaving the town that night and holding up a picket, who was compelled to let them pass. At length they gained the summit of a mountain overlooking Santa Barbara, where they stayed for eight days, meantime watching for some American vessel to come close to the coast, offering a means of escape. They were without food and in desperate straits. Many times they tried to capture a cow or a sheep, but having no lasso they failed. They did manage to get hold of an old horse that served them for a time.

Finally they gave up all hope of rescue by sea, or of going north by the regular route. During their stay on the mountain the Californians set fire to the woods to try to burn them out. A foreigner was sent to them with the terms of surrender, but they were a gritty lot, determined not to fall into Flores's hands. They attempted to cross the mountains and go into the San Joaquin Valley, taking their chances with the Tulare Indians. It required three days for the party to cross the first ridge. The ascent was very steep and rocky in places. Once they were half the night in making less than three hundred yards. Meanwhile they subsisted on rosebuds—not very substantial food for mountain climbing. Passing over the first ridge they fell in with an old Spanish soldier at a rancho. From him they got two horses and some dried beef, which they ate with a real relish. The old soldier became their guide and conducted them over the eighty miles of mountainous country to the San Joaquin. After a period of thirty-four days, in which they traveled about five hundred miles, they at last joined Colonel Frémont at Monterey.

CHAPTER X

The Court-Martial and the Absurd Verdict

It was close to the end of November when the Commander of the California Battalion began his march to Los Angeles. The weather was very inclement. It had rained steadily for a number of days and traveling was exceedingly difficult owing to the muddy roads. Aside from this the animals were in poor condition. The old grass was washed by the deluge of water that had been descending and feed was scarce. The wind blew cold and many of the horses, too weak to travel, fell by the wayside and were left behind. The consequence was that before long a portion of the battalion was on foot. Among those composing the force were a number of Indians—Walla Wallas, a few Delawares, and a few others from the Sacramento Valley. They acted as scouts and were under the command of Richard Jacob of Louisville, Kentucky, who afterward became a brother-in-law of Frémont. During the march a part of these scouts camped without fires, some two miles ahead of the battalion and the others about the same distance in the rear, so there could be no surprise attack. At the same time no one could pass without their knowledge. Each day twelve beeves were killed and every man roasted his ration at the camp fire. The beef cattle were driven along and the cold weather and exercise gave the men enormous appetites. They were a healthy lot despite their many hardships.

The personal appearance of Frémont at this time is described as follows:

“He was rather spare built, weighing about one hundred and fifty pounds; height about 5 feet 9. Complexion fair with keen, blue eyes and a Romanish nose, with brown hair parted in the middle. His carriage was erect and not without dignity.”

In the beginning the route lay up the San Benito River and over the hills into the Salinas Valley. As a whole the battalion was most obedient and respectful at all times, the reports of their misdeeds to the contrary notwithstanding. As an instance of the strict discipline exercised a member of the battalion gives the following:

“The next day before we marched the priest made complaint that the church had been robbed and a little golden image of Christ had been stolen. The whole force was ordered to form in single rank; that the officers should search every man and that the person upon whom the image might be found should be shot. But the stolen property could not be found. Then it was ordered that whoever had stolen it should not be shot, but should be drummed out of the force in disgrace. Finally it was discovered that a man named Smith was the culprit. His manner had made him suspected from the first and under pressure he confessed and went with some of the officers and dug the image out of the ground where he had buried it. He was accordingly drummed out of the company. The image was duly restored to the priest, who received it most thankfully and with great rejoicing by his flock at the mission.”

A pass was required by every man who left camp and no justifiable cause for complaint could be made against the battalion by any Californian. In a march of this kind the amount of baggage was reduced to a minimum. The men slept at night in their wet blankets and there was little complaining among them. Doubtless they were so fatigued when the time came for rest that they lay down and slept soundly regardless of the rain. At the same time there were many humorous instances to add to the cheer of the men. Says a writer who was with the party:

“About midnight the whole camp was aroused by the report of a sentry’s rifle. In a moment the whole force was up and in order for attack or defense. On examination the alarm proved to be without cause. The sentinel who fired was rather green, but a very good fellow. He stated that he was sure a man rode up near him in the dark, he had hailed this man three times without getting an answer, upon which he fired and thought he had killed the intruder. On examining into the cause for all this alarm it was found he had killed a mule. His only punishment was to be laughed at.”

On December 14th a temporary camp was made on the mountain overlooking San Luis Obispo. In company with William Knight the Colonel went to a point where he could get a good view of the Mission below, but was unable to tell whether or not there was any of the enemy stationed there. It was a rainy night with a chill wind from the southeast. After nightfall the horses were saddled and the battalion descended from the mountain and sur-

rounded the Mission, capturing the few people found there. Some tried to escape but were caught. That night the men were housed within the mission walls, a guard being placed over the altar to see that no property was disturbed. At San Luis Obispo some articles of food were purchased and distributed among the men.

Upon receiving information that some of the insurgents were close, Frémont sent out a number of scouting parties in the vicinity and captured in all about thirty men, among them an officer who had been wounded in the fight with Captain Burroughs. An important capture at this time was that of Don Jesus Pico. He was one of those who had given Commodore Stockton his written parole, and who was now leading the insurrection in that region. Twenty-five men went to Pico's house, twenty miles distant, and searched it. His wife declared he was not there and did not know where he was. The searching party had almost given up when a trap door was found under a bed. On opening this it was discovered that the trap door led to a cellar and here Pico had secreted himself in a dark corner. He was placed under arrest and escorted to San Luis Obispo where a court-martial was held. It was decreed that Don Jesus should die for failing to keep his promise. Then came one of the most dramatic episodes in all of Frémont's dramatic career. The hour for the execution had arrived. The firing squad was in the plaza in front of the windows of the room in which the Colonel sat. The air was rife with suppressed excitement. Men spoke in subdued tones. A fellow man was about to die,

a human life was to be snuffed out at the crack of the unhesitating guns. Many of the men were glad that Pico was to face the line of loaded rifles, for was he not in some way the cause of their privations and hardships? There were a few who took keen delight at his misfortune. Don Jesus was about to be led out into the plaza where death awaited him. Suddenly the door to Colonel Frémont's room was opened and Captain Owens entered. He said that a lady begged an interview with the Colonel and asked if he would grant it. On receiving an affirmative answer Owens went out and in a few moments ushered in a little woman in black, followed by several small children. Her face was pale; her eyes were red from weeping. The children, too, were crying pitifully, though not in the full realization of what their mother's mission meant—the life of their father. The little woman was the wife of Don Jesus. She had come to Frémont to plead for her husband. She threw herself at his feet and implored him for mercy. She begged and entreated for the sake of her children, asking him to have compassion, saying that her husband did not know that he was committing a crime, but was ashamed to stay at home when the others went to fight. It was a trying situation for Frémont. He hesitated, then raised the woman from the floor and in a calm voice told her to go home and be quiet, and he would let her know. Sobbing heartbrokenly she passed out of the room and the Colonel sent for Don Jesus. He was brought in—a handsome man less than forty with black hair and eyes. His face was ashen gray, but he bore himself with calm dig-

nity. There was a moment of tense silence, then Frémont pointed through the window to the men lined up in the square. The doomed man felt that his hour had come and that the Colonel had something to say to him before he was led out to be shot.

"You were about to die," said Frémont, "but your wife has saved you. Go thank her."

Instantly he fell upon his knees and made the sign of the Cross. He was completely overcome with emotion. It was some minutes before he could utter a word. Then he said: "I was to die—I had lost the life God gave me. You have given me another life. I devote the new life to you forever." And this pledge he kept ever after, always being one of Frémont's most devoted followers. The happiness of the little wife who pleaded for him was inexpressable. Don Jesus accompanied the Colonel on the rest of his march and was with him during his stay in California, ever a firm and helpful friend. He was a cousin of Don Andres Pico, who was in command of the Californians at San Pascual. His wife was of the Carrillo family.

Frémont was subjected to considerable criticism for this act of clemency, but he knew the nature of the Californians and that they would be more subdued by this than by the bloodshed of any battle. In fact, Frémont seemed destined for criticism. No matter what he did or what he did not do there were always those to find fault with him. As one writer has well said, "Probably no man whose services have been so conspicuous and so valuable to the United States, was ever so contemptuously treated by the government and by numerous unfriendly

critics, most of whom would not have given up a single hour of their comfortable firesides to follow his arduous tracks."

On Christmas Eve the battalion encamped on Santa Ynez ridge near Santa Barbara. The next morning was ushered in by a terrific wind from the southeast and a cold, driving rain that swept the face of the steep mountainside down which they made their descent to the plain. Bryant gives a very vivid account of the march on Christmas Day:

"The rain fell in torrents and the wind blew with almost the force of a tornado. . . . Driving our horses before us we were compelled to slide down the steep and slippery rocks, or wade through deep gullies and ravines filled with mud and foaming torrents of water, that rushed downward with such force as to carry along the loose rocks and tear up the trees and loose shrubbery by the roots. Many of the horses falling into the ravines refused to make an effort to extricate themselves, and were swept downward and drowned. Others, bewildered by the fierceness and terrors of the storm, rushed or fell headlong over the steep precipices and were killed. Others obstinately refused to proceed, but stood quaking with fear or shivering with cold, and many of them perished in the night from the severity of the storm. . . . And a night of more impenetrable and terrific darkness I never witnessed."

In making the perilous descent over a hundred horses were lost and the men suffered terribly. It was an experience long to be remembered by those of the battalion. In getting down from the moun-

tain there were some humorous incidents, one of which is related by a member of the command.

“Among the rest who came down by their own gravity was Major Russel, who was a portly, heavy man and who was always very neat about his dress. We boys watched to see how with his nice uniform he would make the downward passage. He was coming down slowly and dignifiedly when all of a sudden there was a slip and a stagger and his feet flew out from under him and down he came with railroad speed and was unable to put on the brakes and stop till he landed fifty feet from camp, puffing and blowing and covered with mud.”

That night, tired, wet, and bedraggled, the battalion went into camp in the woods at the foot of the mountain. The artillery and baggage were scattered along in a way that suggested the retreat of a broken army. The following morning was fair with a bright sun, the storm having spent its fury. Sunshine always has a reviving and cheering influence and before long they were on their way and entered the town of Santa Barbara unopposed.

The few of Frémont's men who escaped from the town some weeks before and who had joined him at Monterey were wildly welcomed by their former friends and acquaintances. The townspeople had given the men up as lost, the bones of the old white horse being considered mute evidence of a tragic fate when the fire had done its work. While in camp in Santa Barbara two hundred fresh horses were brought in, among them a black stallion with a long mane and tail. The Colonel fell in love with him

and ordered his vaquero to break him to saddle. The vaquero was an excellent rider in whom Frémont had great confidence. The animal was lassoed, the rider finally gaining the saddle when the horse began to buck and continued to buck all around the camp. At last he ran under a tree near Frémont's tent where the vaquero was thrown against a limb of a tree and instantly killed. His death was deeply deplored, and the Colonel ordered the horse to be turned loose.

He remained in Santa Barbara in order to repair the damage done by the storm. The gun crews were anxious to have sights on their guns and the Colonel granted the request. Meantime the men enjoyed a much needed rest. While he was delayed here he was informed by Don Jesus that a lady wished to talk with him. He was told that the lady in question was of middle age, highly respected, and of great influence among the Californians. Thus he was made acquainted with Señora Bernarda Ruiz. In this interview she said that her object in seeing Frémont was to use her influence for peace, that she believed that the contending forces could be brought together on just and friendly terms, and that a compromise could be reached whereby there would be an agreeable settlement of the difficulty. She urged him to take no action until she had consulted with her friends. Frémont was very much impressed by her sincerity and her sound reasoning. He assured her that he would bear her wishes in mind. And thus began the capitulation of Cahuenga.

On the 17th day of January, after a period of

rest and recuperation, the Colonel resumed his march toward Los Angeles. Below Santa Barbara a band of Californian cavalry was sighted numbering about fifty men, but no trouble resulted as the Colonel's policy was one of conciliation. Some fifteen miles south of Santa Barbara is a maritime defile several miles in length, where a mountain ridge skirts the ocean, leaving a narrow strip of beach. A gunboat under command of Lieutenant Selden stood out to sea as the battalion passed along this defile to protect the men from any attack that might be made from the heights above. Nothing occurred, however, and on the 9th Frémont camped at "The Willows" some distance south of the *Rincon*. Here the Colonel was met by Captain Hamlyn of the *Stonington*, who was accompanied by Don Pedro Carrillo. The Captain brought a note from Stockton warning Frémont not to fight the insurgents unless he was very sure of his ground, and then to keep his men in close formation, adding that in the art of horsemanship, of dodging and running the Americans could not compete with the Californians. Evidently the Commodore had learned a few things that Frémont, with his wider experience, had known all the time.

On entering San Bernardo Pass on the morning of the 12th, the Colonel expected to find the Californians in full force, but they were nowhere to be seen. Meantime two officers had ridden into Frémont's camp to inform him that Stockton had retaken Los Angeles after an engagement with the enemy. That afternoon the battalion went into camp at the mission of San Fernando, where Don

Andres Pico, commander of the insurgents, made his home. His camp was only two miles distant, and in the evening Don Jesus carried a note from Frémont to Pico. The next day, accompanied only by Don Jesus, the Colonel rode into the camp of the Californians, where a treaty of capitulation was discussed between the rival officers. A truce was ordered, a commission appointed, and the same day the treaty of capitulation became a reality. This marked the end of the war in California, leaving the United States in complete possession of the territory. The final treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was consummated in 1848.

In writing to the Secretary of the Navy in regard to the capitulation Commodore Stockton said that while he had refused to do it he would at least approve of what Colonel Frémont had done. José Flores made his escape, as Stockton said that if he were caught he would be shot. In his memorable march of over four hundred miles Frémont had met with no opposition, and by his act of pardoning Don Jesus Pico had won a warm spot in the hearts of the Californians. At times a show of mercy is worth a hundred cannon. The Colonel arrived in Los Angeles on the 14th of January. Meanwhile the brass howitzer lost at San Pascual by Kearny when the mules ran away with it was returned to the Americans.

In Los Angeles Frémont assumed the reins of government and Stockton began to prepare for his voyage to the coast of Mexico. The battalion was sent to the mission of San Gabriel, while the Colonel took up his residence in a house formerly occu-

ped by the Mexican governors. He was without a single guard or any show of military protection. General Kearny had taken quarters at Monterey, and a serious dispute arose between him and Stockton as to who should have supreme command in California. This controversy naturally involved Frémont, resulting in a military trial at Washington in which the official rights of a General in the army and a Commodore of the navy were definitely established. However, the termination of the trial, a most unfair and, at times, absurd performance, was unfortunate for Frémont, who was never known to desert a friend and who should have been completely exonerated on the ground that he was placed between two officers of superior rank, each with similar orders, the question of precedence not having been officially determined. But to establish such a precedent at the expense of Frémont was manifestly unfair and altogether wrong. Perhaps the controversy between Stockton and Kearny was caused primarily by the distance between Washington and California and the time required in delivering messages. The instructions given to both officers were practically the same, only events had transpired in California of which the government knew nothing and which altered the conditions very materially. For instance, Kearny was ordered to subdue the Californians and to establish a civil government. Stockton had already accomplished this with the aid of Frémont according to his orders. Says Commodore Stockton's biographer:

"Frémont, throughout the California war, was strictly and technically in the naval service, under

Commodore Stockton. He had taken service under him with an express agreement that he would continue subject to his orders as long as he continued to command in California. This engagement both he and Captain Gillespie had entered into from patriotic motives and to render the most efficient service to the country. He visited California originally on topographical and not military duty. His volunteering under Stockton on special service was patriotic impulse, in complying with which the government was in honor bound to sustain him. He therefore very properly refused to violate his agreement with Stockton and unite with Kearny against him. Having failed to compel Frémont to acknowledge his authority the General addressed himself to the Commodore and demanded that he should abdicate the command-in-chief."

In a letter to Senator Benton the Colonel explained the motives by which he was actuated to take the course he did:

"When I entered Los Angeles I was ignorant of the relations existing between these gentlemen, having received from neither any order nor information which might serve as a guide in the circumstances. I therefore immediately on my arrival waited on the governor and commander-in-chief, Commodore Stockton, and a few minutes afterward called upon General Kearny. I soon found them occupying a hostile attitude and each denying the right of the other to assume the direction of affairs in this country. The ground assumed by General Kearny was that he held in his hand plenary instructions from the President directing him to

conquer California and organize a civil government and that consequently he would not recognize the acts of Commodore Stockton. The latter maintained that his own instructions were to the same effect as Kearny's, that this officer's commission was obsolete and never would have been given could the government have anticipated that the entire country, seaboard and interior, would have been conquered and held by himself. The country had been conquered and a civil government instituted since September last, a constitution of the territory and appointments under the constitution had been sent the government for its approval, and decisive action undoubtedly long since had been upon them. General Kearny had been instructed to conquer the country and upon its threshold his command had almost been cut to pieces and but for the relief of Commodore Stockton would have been destroyed. In regard to the remaining part of his instructions, how could he organize a government without first proceeding to disorganize the present one? His work had been anticipated, his commission was absolutely void, null, and of no effect. But if General Kearny believed that his instructions gave him paramount authority, he made a fatal error on his arrival. . . . On the day of my arrival in Los Angeles General Kearny told me that he did then, at that moment, recognize Commodore Stockton as Governor of the territory. You are aware that I had contracted relations with Commodore Stockton, and I thought it neither right nor politically honorable to withdraw my support. No reason of interest shall compel me to act toward any man in

such a way that I should afterward be ashamed to meet him.”

Such were the views of Colonel Frémont, in which the ordinary individual would have no hesitancy in concurring under the circumstances, but which were found to be erroneous by a military tribunal composed of West Pointers. To explain further the position taken by the Colonel we quote a letter written by him to Kearny in answer to one in which the General gave orders:

SIR:

LOS ANGELES, January, 1847.

I have the honor to be in receipt of your letter of last night in which I am directed to suspend the execution of orders, which, in my capacity of military commandant of this territory I had received from Commodore Stockton, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in California. I avail myself of an early hour this morning to make such a reply as the brief time allowed for reflection will enable me. I found Commodore Stockton in possession of the country, exercising the functions of military commandant and civil governor as early as July last year, and shortly after I received from him the commission of military commandant, the duties of which I immediately entered upon and have continued to exercise to the present moment. I found, also, on my arrival at this place, some three or four days since, Commodore Stockton still exercising the functions of civil and military governor with the same apparent deference to his rank on the part of all officers (yourself included) as he maintained and required when he assumed command in July last. I learned, also, in conversation with you, that on the march from San Diego recently to this place you entered upon and discharged duties, implying an acknowledgment on your part of supremacy to Commodore Stockton. I feel, therefore, with great deference to your professional

and personal character, constrained to say that until you and Commodore Stockton adjust between yourselves the question of rank, where I respectfully think the difficulty belongs, I shall have to report and receive orders as heretofore from the Commodore.

With considerations of high regards I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. FRÉMONT.

*Lieutenant-Colonel U. S. Army and Military
Commandant of the Territory of California.*

Later on Commodore Stockton sent Kearny a letter in which the General was told that he could consider himself "suspended from the command of the United States forces at this place." In reply Kearny informed the Commodore that he was acting under orders from the President and demanded that he "cease further proceedings in the matter." It looked for a time as if a collision were inevitable between the two. The correspondence waxed fast and furious. Meantime Frémont remained loyal to the Commodore, as would any honorable man and officer. As to how the soldiers regarded the controversy between Kearny and Frémont may be gleaned from the diary of George William Hayden, of the Seventh New York Volunteers stationed at Monterey:

"Some differences have arisen between Kearny and Frémont, who are still at variance on account of civil jurisdiction and government of the country, Frémont claiming a precedent of priority in subjugating the people, while Kearny was sent by the government to supersede him. This difficulty must be settled at Washington. Frémont, who is

popular here, has, I think, more superior claims to the government of the country than has Kearny." This is the way the matter appealed to the average man.

Without saying a word to Frémont, or bidding him good-by Kearny suddenly left Los Angeles for Monterey. Early in March and after Stockton had sailed for Mexico there were rumors of trouble at Los Angeles on account of the approach of the Mormon Battalion and the issuing of proclamations incompatible with the treaty of Cahuenga. At any rate, Frémont thought it of sufficient importance to report it to General Kearny. H. H. Bancroft, with his usual prejudice against the Colonel, remarks that "these alarms were invented later as an excuse for disobeying Kearny's orders," as though there were any sense or reason in such a supposition. Moreover, it is not probable that to inform Kearny the Colonel would have mounted a horse and made a record-breaking ride from Los Angeles to Monterey if his fears were not well grounded. He says, "I made a most extraordinary ride to give information to prevent an insurrection. The only thing, it would seem, that I came for in that interview was to insult General Kearny and to offer my resignation. . . . Certainly the public service, to say nothing of myself as an officer, required a different kind of reception from the one I received." It seems that there was much excitement in Los Angeles and men went about armed to the teeth. That the ride was "extraordinary" admits of no doubt.

It was in the early morning when Frémont, ac-

accompanied by Don Jesus Pico and his colored servant, Jacob Dodson, rode out of Los Angeles. Their route led over a mountainous country with few settlements and poor roads, not to mention various defiles, particularly the one just south of Santa Barbara, which can be passed only when the tide is out and the sea is calm. At that time the only towns between Monterey and Los Angeles were Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo. Otherwise the country was a comparative wilderness. Each one of the party had three horses—nine in all—and the riders alternated their mounts, riding first one and then another. The six loose horses ran ahead without bridle or halter, free as the wind, only they had to be kept going in the right direction, which required some work. When one of them was wanted, at a distance of twenty or thirty miles, it was lassoed by either Don Jesus or Dodson, who had become as expert with a lariat as a Mexican and equally proficient with a rifle. None of the horses were shod—a custom among the Californians. The first day, at a swinging gallop, they covered one hundred and twenty-five miles, passing over the mountains at San Fernando, traversing the defile south of Santa Barbara and halting for the night at a ranch beyond that town. Dodson's arm was a little lame from throwing the lasso, but otherwise the riders were in excellent condition. The day following they traveled one hundred and twenty-five miles, crossing the Santa Barbara mountain, where the battalion had lost so many horses the Christmas before. At nine o'clock that night they arrived at San Luis Obispo, the home of Don Jesus, where a great re-

ception awaited Frémont on account of the pardoning of his faithful companion. Here he was detained until ten o'clock the next morning receiving the visits of the townspeople and partaking of an excellent breakfast especially prepared in his honor. The nine horses from Los Angeles were left here, while nine fresh ones took their place. A Mexican boy was employed to look after the horses that ran loose. Traveling at their usual gait they made about seventy miles. At eight o'clock Don Jesus, who had spent a jolly evening with family and friends, became fatigued and suggested that they camp for the night. They were then in the Salinas Valley, where they found a good camping place in a small grove. The Mexican boy was to stand guard and some time between midnight and morning there was a stampede among the horses, together with cries from the boy. The cause of the disturbance was not Indians, but bears. The Colonel reached for his pistols, but Don Jesus told him to lie still, that people could "scare bears," and on yelling at them in Spanish they departed. However, there was no sleep after this, the horses having become very much frightened. A rousing fire was built and breakfast prepared from the supplies obtained at San Luis Obispo.

The journey was resumed at daybreak, and in the afternoon, having covered some eighty miles, the party rode into Monterey. The next day, following his unsatisfactory interview with Kearny, the Colonel set out on the return trip. Don Jesus wished to try an experiment with two of the horses ridden by Frémont. These horses were brothers, a year's

difference in age, and the older of the two was taken for the trial. Starting late in the afternoon thirty miles were covered the first day and ninety the second, when the Colonel insisted on changing his mount to the younger animal in order to make San Luis Obispo, thirty miles distant. The older horse, now free, took the lead and maintained it, entering the town with nostrils distended and as full of life as when fresh from the pasture. All the horses made their one hundred and twenty-five miles that day. In all they made the round trip of over eight hundred miles in eight days, including stops and two days' detention—a whole day and night at Monterey and nearly two half days at San Luis Obispo. It was a most remarkable ride when we take into consideration the rough and comparatively roadless condition of the country, and one which went to show the wonderful endurance of the California horse.

It was not until the 13th of February, 1847, that a dispatch for Commodore Stockton arrived from the Secretary of the Navy, although the Commodore was not apprised of the nature of this message until more than a month had elapsed and Colonel Frémont had no knowledge of it whatsoever until the time of his trial in Washington. The instructions from the Secretary read as follows:

“The President has deemed it best for the public interest to invest the military officer commanding with the direction of operations on land and with the administrative functions of government over the people and territory occupied by us. You will relinquish to Colonel Mason or to General

Kearny, if the latter shall arrive before you do so, the entire control over these matters and turn over to him all papers necessary to the performance of these duties.”

The instructions to General Kearny from the Secretary stated that “the President is persuaded that when his definite instructions were received all questions of difficulty were settled and all feelings which had been elicited by the agitation of them had subsided. Should Lieutenant Frémont, *who has the option to return or remain*, adopt the latter alternative, the President does not doubt that you will employ him in a manner as will render his services most available to the public interest, having reference to his extensive acquaintance with the residents of California and his knowledge of their language, qualifications independent of others, which it is supposed may be very useful in the present and prospective state of affairs in that country.”

The “definite instructions” to which reference is made by the Secretary were never communicated to Colonel Frémont. Of this correspondence he remained in utter ignorance. He was never told that it was optional with him whether he stayed in California or not, a choice not permitted him by General Kearny.

The General assumed command and sent Colonel Mason to Los Angeles with authority over Frémont, something that proved very irritating to the latter. Mason apparently took extreme pleasure in annoying the Colonel, evidently sharing the grudge Kearny held against him. It is patent that Mason

was not a very popular officer. In reference to him we read in the diary of Mr. Hayden: "Colonel Mason, acting Governor, has, it seems, contrived already to make himself unpopular with both natives and soldiers." An opinion of one of the rank and file usually reflects the general impression. It is quite certain that this officer was seldom in a genial mood. Frémont found him very disagreeable. He would give orders calculated to humiliate the Colonel, having a fine opportunity to do so. Finally Frémont came to the conclusion that Mason was seeking trouble. It was his habit to send for the Colonel several times during the day to be questioned in the presence of other officers who, it is said, were to be used as witnesses against him. At last forbearance ceased and Frémont asserted himself. It was on the day that he was directed by Mason to make a trip into the country for the purpose of bringing in one hundred and twenty horses that had been in pasture. The animals were to be used in a contemplated march into Mexico. Frémont little thought that even then his enemies were collecting evidence against him. The order to get the horses was worded in a way not at all to the Colonel's liking. In fact it was insulting under the circumstances. The time allowed to execute the order was altogether too limited. Mason sent twice for Frémont the same afternoon to come to his quarters. The Colonel took offense at the brusque and overbearing attitude of the former and some words passed between them, whereon Mason snapped, "None of your insolence or I will put you in irons!" Frémont's suspicions were well founded

by the fact that when the horses were brought in they were sold to one of Mason's friendly witnesses for a dollar each.

The friends of the Colonel were of the opinion that Mason was planning trouble, but advised him to keep his head and avoid an open quarrel. This he had tried to do until the insult above quoted had been made when he rose in righteous wrath and asked Mason if he held himself personally responsible for what he had said. Mason affirming that he did, Frémont mounted his horse and went immediately to his quarters and wrote two notes, in one of which he asked a retraction of the insulting words and in the other a challenge should he refuse. It must be remembered that this was a time when dueling was considered the proper way to settle affairs of honor between gentlemen and the Colonel's indignation at the repeated insults that had been paid him knew no bounds. The two notes were delivered to Mason by Frémont's friend, Major P. B. Reading. Mason refused to apologize and was given his choice of weapons, choosing the double-barreled shotgun with which he was said to be an expert, but which the Colonel had never used. However, his friends secured a gun of this kind and at daybreak he was ready for the meeting. Nothing was heard from Mason until about noon when Captain Smith of the dragoons arrived with a note apprising the Colonel that Mason's presence was required at Monterey and that he would hear from him later. For the time the duel was deferred. When Mason arrived at Monterey Kearny came south to Los Angeles. He had a talk with Frémont

about the duel and forbade it, presenting him with a written order to that effect, a similar order having been given to Mason. A little later Frémont went to Monterey, where he was waited upon by Captain Tyler, an intimate friend of Mason, who told him he did not call under the direction of anyone, but that he had had a long talk with Mason, who disavowed any intention of insulting Frémont. The Colonel paid no heed to Tyler's talk, but went to Mason's quarters where he was asked to sit down, but did not do so, remarking that he had called simply to let Mason know that he was in Monterey. Frémont then walked out of Mason's quarters and in a short time received a note from that officer stating that as General Kearny had issued an order forbidding the duel he thought it best to defer it until some time in the future.

Mason received a letter from Commodore Biddle, who took Stockton's place, imploring him to forget the duel, that collisions at that time would be highly injurious to the public interest and would injure his military reputation. Frémont addressed a note to Mason in which he acquiesced in what the latter had said, stating that he was ready for the duel any time that it was convenient. And there the matter rested. In forbidding the duel General Kearny did not carry out the rules and articles of war, which require "every officer commanding an army regiment, post or detachment, who is knowing to a challenge being given or accepted by any officer, non-commissioned officer, or soldier under his command, or has reason to believe the same to be the case, immediately *to arrest and bring to trial*

such offenders." Perhaps, Kearny thought a warning to the participants would be sufficient. Nevertheless he did not carry out the provisions of the law, probably not wishing to cause Mason any trouble. Had Mason not accepted the challenge doubtless Kearny would have been only too glad to arrest Frémont.

On June 14th the Colonel addressed a letter to General Kearny saying that in private letters in which he had confidence it was stated that the President had been pleased to direct that he be permitted to join his regiment in Mexico, or return directly to the United States. He preferred to take the latter course and at his own expense. This request the General refused to grant, but on the contrary wrote Frémont from Sutter's Fort informing him that he, together with members of his topographical party, were expected to join him no later than the 16th to begin the march to Missouri. Such an order was in direct opposition to the advices of the war department, who had left it optional with the Colonel as to what he should do. Now that Kearny was in sole command he was determined to pay Frémont back for his alleged disobedience in taking orders from Commodore Stockton. Frémont little suspected what was in the General's mind when he ordered him to return. Nor did he know until he reached Fort Leavenworth the following August, save that he was treated with "deliberate disrespect," to quote John Bigelow, throughout the journey. An entry in Hayden's diary describes the crossing of the San Joaquin by the party:

"General Kearny transported all of his men and

baggage across the river by means of our boat of hides. Colonel Frémont, who brought up in the rear, was the last to cross, though had it been optional with him, he would have been the first over from his superior knowledge in these matters. However, he soon built himself a raft and eventually got before us all after the passage was effected. They travel in company and camp separately.”

The party crossed the Sierra Nevada by way of Donner Pass, where Kearny directed the burial of the remains of the Donner victims, who perished here the winter before. On arriving at Fort Leavenworth Kearny sent for Frémont and had Lieutenant Wharton read to him a copy of the first paragraph of an order he had just issued:

“Lieutenant-Colonel Frémont, of the regiment of mounted riflemen, will turn over to the officers of the different departments at this post the horses, mules and other public property in the use of the topographical party now in his charge, for which receipts will be given. He will arrange the accounts of these men (nineteen in number) so that they can be paid at the earliest possible date. Lieutenant Colonel Frémont, having performed the above duty, will consider himself under arrest and will then repair to Washington City and report himself to the Adjutant General.”

And this after all his months of hardship, after all his privation and self-sacrifice in the conquest of California, in which he bore so manly and conspicuous a part—after having suffered cold and starvation and untold misery to return a prisoner and in disgrace! As Bigelow has said:

“His achievements and rapid promotion had awakened the jealousy of certain sordid hearts and narrow minds, and, like Columbus, instead of being permitted to continue his researches in the vast region which he had first brought within the reach of science, he was required to come home and defend himself from the attacks of men who had just enough sense to envy his successes without the ability to achieve them.”

On Frémont's way to Washington his route led through St. Louis, where a brilliant reception awaited him. This compensated in a measure for the insults he received while traveling with Kearny from California. Many of the leading citizens of St. Louis called to pay him their respects. He was invited to a public dinner given in his honor, but under the circumstances was forced to decline the invitation. Before his arrival in Washington the papers teemed with the news of his arrest. There was much comment, some of which reached the ears of his mother, who lay dying at her home in Aiken, South Carolina. She was not prepared for news of this kind and the shock was more than she could bear. On reaching Washington the Colonel asked for a leave of absence and at once started for Aiken, where he arrived too late. His mother had passed on.

The townspeople of Charleston purchased an exquisitely wrought sword and presented it to Frémont as a “memorial of their high appreciation of the gallantry and science he has displayed in his services in Oregon and California.” The ladies of that city presented him with a gold-mounted belt.

Previous to leaving Washington for the South he had requested of the Adjutant General as speedy a trial as possible and there was little delay. A general court-martial was ordered to assemble on the 2nd of November at Fort Monroe, Virginia, but was afterward changed to the arsenal at Washington. Captain John F. Lee of the ordnance department was appointed judge advocate. Senator Thomas H. Benton and William Carey Jones, the Colonel's brother-in-law, were selected to conduct the defense. As the members of the court were close friends of General Kearny the verdict was a foregone conclusion. It was no doubt the most memorable military trial, and at the same time the most unfair ever held in the United States, lasting from the beginning of November, 1847, to the last of January, 1848. In numerous instances throughout the trial the truth was horribly mutilated. General Kearny swore that the several charges on which Frémont was arraigned were not his, that he had preferred a single charge only, and that the charges against Frémont had been changed, whereas the Secretary of War gave the assurance that "all the charges were based upon facts alleged and officially reported to the department by General Kearny."

Frémont prepared his own defense, which was read to the court, and which should have been sufficient to prove to any body of unbiased inquisitors that he did only what any loyal and honorable man would have done when placed between two rival commanders when the question of rank had not been officially determined. The whole proceeding

was marked by glaring inconsistencies and evasions on the part of witnesses for the prosecution, but the military gentlemen composing the tribunal were so fraught with jealousy and so piqued at Frémont's deference to a naval commander that they demanded his conviction.

In a letter addressed to the court-martial by Commodore Stockton, he said:

"For each and every act of Lieutenant Colonel Frémont performed under my authority and in obedience to my orders, I cannot but feel that in some form or other I am responsible, if the acts were in themselves illegal, or in the execution of them, criminal."

Little wonder that Stockton felt as he did, and a greater one that the court should have found Frémont guilty as charged. Had he deserted the Commodore and gone to Kearny, as the latter commanded him to do, he would not only have forfeited his own self-respect, but would have lost the confidence of the public which was with him from the beginning. Says Mr. Dellenbaugh:

"Justice is well represented blind! Even with one eye open at this court-marital never could she have arrived at the decision to summarily dismiss from the army of the United States, on a technicality created by a difference of opinion between two of his superior officers, the young, brilliant, indefatigable, efficient and devoted Lieutenant Colonel Frémont. Four of the officers of the court afterward admitted that the 'oldest officer in the army would have been puzzled how to act on the question, which Mr. Frémont had been called upon by

his superior officers to decide for them—the question of relative rank between a Commodore and a General.’ If the American people have tears to shed over this injustice they should let them fall belated upon the grave at Piermont. A reprimand would have been proper; Frémont had not refused to act, but simply declined to acknowledge that a General had authority over the Commodore to whom he had pledged himself long before the General had appeared on the scene; and it would seem that these technical charges more concerned the superiors than they did Frémont, the victim. . . . Was it a deliberate attempt to break the success of Frémont by the West Point element as so often charged by Senator Benton? Regretfully, I admit, it looks uncomfortably that way.”

The court softened its verdict of guilty by recommending that clemency should be shown the Colonel by the President on account of his professional services. In his review of the findings of the court President Polk decided that he found nothing to substantiate the crime of mutiny, but approved of the sentence otherwise. However, he remitted the penalty of dismissal from the service, stating that Lieutenant Colonel Frémont “will accordingly be released from arrest, will resume his sword and report for duty.”

Feeling that he had done absolutely nothing to warrant the verdict of the court and that a great injustice had been done him Colonel Frémont tendered his resignation to the Adjutant General. He felt that with the envy and prejudice his success had aroused against him in army circles it would be

the height of folly for him to attempt to remain in the service. In the thirty-fourth year of his life his connection with the military profession was terminated. He had already made his name known to science throughout the world. As a geographer he had won imperishable fame. As an explorer he had been of inestimable value to his country, to say nothing of his triumph in winning California to the Union. Aside from this he had achieved an immense popularity because of his many daring exploits and unlimited courage—a popularity bordering on hero worship, and which was increased to a certain extent by the gross injustice of his military trial. Despite all the honors heaped upon him he maintained his innate modesty and was by no means content to rest upon his laurels.

In June the Senate gave orders for a map he had prepared of Oregon and California, of which twenty thousand copies were to be printed. There was also a geographical memoir of Northern California, illustrative of the map. Professor Torrey of the Smithsonian Institution published a description of the plants collected by Frémont under the title, "*Plantae Frémontianae*." Later on glowing tributes were paid him by Baron Humboldt on behalf of the King of Prussia and by the Royal Geographical Society of London. As a minister of the Prussian government Humboldt was charged to present Frémont with the "Great Golden Medal for Progress in the Sciences." From the Geographical Society of London he received the Founder's Medal for his "preëminent services in promoting the cause of geographical science." Just what the United

States did for him is not recorded, but it furnished a goodly supply of critics.

Previous to going to Los Angeles in 1847 Frémont had given Consul Larkin some three thousand dollars with which to buy an old mission farm, but Larkin bought the place for himself, investing the Colonel's money in a Mexican land grant known as the Mariposas, which contained over forty thousand acres or seventy square miles. Save for the gold produced on this land it was of little value and has not increased much to the present day. This tract lay about one hundred and twenty miles east of San Francisco. The property was formerly owned by Don Juan Alvarado, who deeded it to Colonel Frémont in February, 1847. The grant was confirmed in December, 1852, and the following September this was filed in the office of the commissioners appointed to ascertain and settle the private land claims in California. Then there was a notice by the Attorney General that an appeal from the Commissioners' decision to the District Court of the United States would be prosecuted. In consequence of this action the decision was reversed. The case was then appealed to the Supreme Court and the decision was upheld. Following the court-martial in Washington the Senate Military Committee began an investigation into the California claims for service in the conquest of that territory. Frémont was much interested in getting these claims settled satisfactorily with the men, who had belonged to the California Battalion and who had taken Stockton's offer of ten dollars a month as a joke. The claims were adjusted in a way that gave to the men

adequate compensation. During the arguments before the committee the Colonel received many highly complimentary tributes.

It had always been Frémont's dream to have a home for himself and family in the Golden State, and it was to this end that his activities were directed. He was free to do as his fancy dictated. He was not bound by any restrictions such as a military position imposed. His great ambition was to find the most suitable highway across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast—the one best for a common road as well as for a railway. He was firm in the belief that there was still an easier route to be found than any he had yet traveled. With this object in view he began to prepare for his fourth expedition. This journey was to be made mainly at his own expense, though several citizens of St. Louis were interested in the enterprise. A part of his camp equipment was contributed by O. D. Filley, inventor of the Dutch oven, while Doctor George Engleman, a gentleman of great personal worth and scientific attainments, came to his aid in other of his preparations. It was his intention to make the line of his route along the headwaters of the Rio Grande, having reason to believe that this particular region had never been explored. He had been informed by mountaineers that a fine pass existed through the mountains at that point. The route as decided upon would take him through the country occupied by the Utes, Apaches, Navahos, Comanches and other tribes, all of whom were on the warpath. He was thus preparing for a journey that involved more danger than any he had yet

undertaken, as the Indians were now thoroughly aroused to the constant encroachment by the white settlers on their hunting grounds, something the various tribes were determined to resist with all their power. They felt they were being gradually crowded out as more and more the whites increased in number.

In October, 1848, Frémont, accompanied by his wife, reached the point of departure, the Delaware Indian reservation, near the frontier of Missouri. While her husband was traveling overland to California Mrs. Frémont was planning to make the trip via Panama. For a time she would remain in Washington with her father. In the eight years of their married life the Colonel had been away five, so it is little wonder that he longed for a home in California, where he could get acquainted with his family.

The night Frémont bade good-by to the agency and started on his adventuresome journey the cries of a mother wolf disturbed Mrs. Frémont so that she could not sleep. Finally when slumber came it was broken by the arrival of the Colonel, who had ridden back ten miles to spend an hour with his wife. The colored servant made the couple a cup of tea and Mrs. Frémont says, "with our early cup of tea for a stirrup cup, he gave his bridle rein a shake and we went our ways—one into the midwinter snows of untracked mountains and the other to the long sea voyage through the tropics." However, for her it meant a camping trip across the Isthmus of Panama as no railroad existed at that time.

From the Indian Agency to Bent's Fort the

Colonel followed the line of the southern Kansas, believing in this valley he could most easily approach the mountains. Among Easterners the crossing of the Rocky Mountains by rail was then regarded as almost impossible. It was Frémont's business to discover the most practical route. That he should choose the winter time for the trip was for the reason that "all obstacles which could exist to the construction of the road might be known and fully determined." Nevertheless it seemed poor judgment to undergo the rigors of a severe winter for the purpose of finding out how deep the snow was, or what the thermometer registered. But such was the Colonel's idea. He had planned to go west to the head of the Rio Grande and somewhere between Walker's Pass and Mono Lake to find an easy way over the Sierra Nevada. The greater part of this region was unexplored. The Colorado River ran through it and no one seemed to know anything about this section of the country. It is very rugged and is said to be one of the most difficult to traverse within the borders of the United States. It was toward this inhospitable region that Frémont now set his face.

He arrived at Bent's Fort in November and went south to the "Big Timbers" for a visit with the Indian Agent, Fitzpatrick, whose name was so closely identified with his own. It was here that he learned from both the whites and the Indians that the season was well advanced in the mountains, the snow having already covered the ranges, while the weather was disagreeably cold. With these reports and the advice of his friends he should have hesi-

tated before going ahead, but this was not characteristic of Frémont. He would proceed when he once got started no matter what the consequences. Accordingly he marched boldly toward the great white barriers of the West, while the snow descended upon him, robing the earth in a mantle of white. There was a difference in crossing the Sierra Nevada in winter, as beyond them lay a land of glorious sunshine, of fruits and flowers, but beyond the Rockies was an uninviting region, bleak and treeless for hundreds of miles. Yet Frémont was optimistic as usual and was on his way at the break of dawn.

CHAPTER XI

The Fourth Expedition and Its Disastrous Termination

Arrived at Pueblo he found the snow quite deep in consequence of which his progress was slow. In the place of Carson and Fitzpatrick the Colonel had Godey, an excellent man. There were also Taplin, King, and once again Preuss, topographer, who yearned for another taste of adventurous life, after having experienced some of the thrills and excitement during the memorable journey across the Sierras. There were in all thirty-one men including the guide, Bill Williams, who was supposed to know the Rocky Mountains better than any man living. He was a first-rate shot and had formerly been a Methodist preacher in Missouri. He spoke with fluency a number of Indian tongues and, although of middle age, he was singularly well preserved. Owing to the winter season, Williams, who was engaged at Pueblo, had some misgivings about attempting the trip, but decided they could make it, not promising a pleasant time.

On leaving Pueblo the party followed up a creek for some distance, after which they crossed the Wet Mountain range and descended into the Wet Mountain Valley. The men walked and the animals carried about one hundred and thirty bushels of shelled corn. The first day they traveled eight miles. Several of the men climbed to a high point near camp to take a farewell look at the great plains stretching

eastward, covered with their robe of new fallen snow. It was intensely cold, the thermometer registering zero throughout the day.

According to Micajah McGehee, one of the party who kept a diary, they traveled through the White Mountain Valley and Wet Mountain Valley, which lie between the Wet Mountain and Sangre de Cristo ranges. Through the latter range there were three passes, and Williams chose the middle one, known as Roubideau's Pass, as the best to reach the Rio Grande for which Frémont was headed. There were Spanish trails through all these passes, the country being known to the Spanish settlers who lived further on down the Rio Grande. McGehee emphasizes the intensity of the cold, stating that at times the mercury in the thermometer so contracted in the bulb as to render the instrument useless. The men began to show fatigue. Some of them were severely frost bitten, and the animals became worn out and helpless, falling in the trail and unable to rise. The breath of the men froze on their beards; their hands were numb, and the covering of ice over their faces made articulation difficult. Still they pressed onward and upward, wallowing through great drifts, the horses lunging and plunging in a mad effort to escape the snow banks that surrounded them.

After crossing the Sangre de Cristo Range they descended into the San Luis Valley, which they crossed, keeping due west and arriving at the Rio Grande on December 11th, 1848, not far from the present town of Del Norte, Colorado. They found the river frozen over, but were able to build fires

and keep warm owing to the heavy growth of cottonwoods and willows.

They were now confronted by the great San Juan Range, rising to a height of fourteen thousand feet, and as Frémont says, "one of the highest, most rugged and impracticable of all the Rocky Mountain ranges, inaccessible to trappers and hunters even in the summer time." Their stay on the Rio Grande was short, and in a few days they were making their way along the icy mountain ledges and through the snows of wild and rugged canyons. Winter was now at its height. In any direction they might look they saw only the snowy, untrodden ranges, the white solitude broken by the sound of their voices and the horses floundering through the powdery drifts. Occasionally a pack-laden mule would stumble and fall down the steep mountainside and disappear as though the earth had swallowed him. Each hour brought new hardships. The men suffered more and more from the biting cold. Now and then a blinding blizzard struck them like an icy sword. They were almost suffocated by the clouds of fine snow, driven by a fierce gale, that filled the air and made breathing very difficult. They resorted to the use of mauls to beat down the snow, but it was a hopeless task. The horses and mules lay down on the trail from utter exhaustion and froze to death. Most of the men were thoroughly disheartened as their way thus far had been marked by disaster—lost baggage and dead animals. After a terrific struggle they reached at last an elevation of twelve thousand feet. Their supply of corn was gone. There was no grass except

a scarce bit on the most exposed ridges, where the wind had full sweep and the snow had been blown away. It was utterly impossible to make a descent, as the snow was too deep. Neither could they remain on the heights with so little food to sustain them and a wind that cut like a knife and brought tears to the eyes. It was a terrible situation. Their immediate surroundings were ice, snow, and rocks, with no place to camp. To reach the line of timber some three miles below was impossible. A blizzard was raging and the animals had reached the limit of their endurance. The freezing wind beat upon them day and night with an indescribable intensity. The mules—over a hundred in number—huddled together from an instinct of self-preservation and died, one by one, and as they fell the falling snow laid its white folds over them.

The men now thought only of saving their own lives. Something must be done. Each moment added to their misery. They were in despair. They tried desperately to go on, but after repeated attempts failed miserably. Bill Williams was nearly frozen to death as he sat on his mule. Five days dragged by and they had made no headway. The animals that survived became ravenous from hunger. They ate the blankets that covered them; they ate the pads from the pack saddles; they ate the blankets that belonged to the men, and at length they chewed off each other's manes and tails. Hunger had driven them mad. In this desperate situation Frémont decided to go back to the San Luis Valley. The retreat was begun on the 22nd of December. For a week they struggled to reach the

little creek over the crest of the ridge, this stream leading to the main river. Now they began to eat the carcasses of the dead mules and, having no hope of saving any of the animals, killed and ate the ones that had not succumbed to cold and starvation.

At this time the thermometer registered twenty degrees below zero, and the suffering of the famished party beggars description. To many of the men the world seemed unreal. They moved in a terrible dream, with hunger gnawing at their vitals and cold benumbing their senses. Frémont observes that those of his party, with the exception of Godey, King, and Taplin, members of his former expeditions, were quickly discouraged, but under the conditions who could blame them? A man faint from hunger has little nerve left, and these adventurers were not only faint from lack of food but were actually starving and half frozen.

It was computed to be eight days' travel to Taos, the nearest settlement in New Mexico, and on Christmas Day four men were selected to go to the Rio Grande to get mules and provisions. They were King, Croitzfeldt, Brackenridge, and the guide, Bill Williams. The remaining men were to move the baggage down the valley. Sixteen days were allowed the four to go to Taos and return, but the days wore away and the party sent out for relief failed to appear. Meantime the baggage had been moved and one of the men named Proue froze to death on the trail, though Frémont was unable to comprehend this unless the man was utterly discouraged and did not care to live and suffer longer. In a letter addressed to his wife and written from

the home of his old friend, Kit Carson, at Taos, the Colonel recounts some of the terrible hardships he and his men endured:

“Like many a Christmas for years back mine was spent on the summit of a wintry mountain, my heart filled with gloomy and anxious thoughts, with none of the merry faces and pleasant luxuries that belong to that happy time. You may be sure we contrasted much of this with the last at Washington and speculated much on your doings and made many warm wishes for your happiness. Could you have looked into Agrippa’s glass for a few moments only! You remember the volumes of Blackstone I took from your father’s library when we were overlooking it at our friend Brant’s? They made my Christmas amusements. I read them to pass the heavy time and forget what was around me. Certainly you may suppose that my first law lessons will be well remembered. Day after day passed by and no news from our express party. Snow continued to fall almost incessantly on the mountain. The spirits of the camp grew lower. Proue lay down in the trail and froze to death. In a sunshiny day and having means with him to make a fire he threw his blankets down on the trail and lay there till he froze to death. After sixteen days had elapsed since King’s departure I became so uneasy at the delay that I decided to wait no longer. I was aware that our troops had been engaged in hostilities with the Spanish Utahs and Apaches who range the North River Valley and became fearful that they (King’s party) had been cut off by Indians; I could imagine no other accident. Leaving

the camp employed with the baggage in charge of Vincent Haler I started down the river with a small party consisting of Godey (with his young nephew), Preuss, and Saunders. We carried our arms and provisions for two or three days. In the camp the messes had provisions for two or three meals, more or less, and about five pounds of sugar to each man. Failing to meet King my intention was to make the Red River settlement about twenty-five miles north of Taos and send back the speediest relief possible. My instructions to the camp were that if they did not hear from me within a stated time they were to follow down the Del Norte.

“On the second day after leaving camp we came upon a fresh trail of Indians, two lodges with a considerable number of animals. This did not lessen our uneasiness for our people. As their trail when we met it turned and went down the river we followed it. On the fifth day we surprised an Indian on the ice of the river. He proved to be a Utah, son of the Grand River Chief we had formerly known and behaved to us in a friendly manner. We encamped near them at night. By the present of a rifle, my two blankets, and other promised rewards when I should get in, I prevailed upon this Indian to go with us as a guide to the Red River settlements and take with him four of his horses, principally to carry our little baggage. These were wretchedly poor and could get along only on a very slow walk. On that day (the 6th) we left the lodges late and traveled only some six or seven miles. After sunset we discovered a little smoke in a grove of timber off from the river and thinking perhaps it might be our

express party on its return we went to see. This was the twenty-second day since they left us and the sixth since we left camp. We found them—Croitzfeldt, Brackenridge, and Williams, the most miserable objects I have ever seen. I did not recognize Croitzfeldt's features when Brackenridge brought him up and mentioned his name. They had been starving. King had starved to death a few days before. His remains were some six or eight miles above, near the river. By the aid of the horses we carried these men with us to the Red River settlement, which we reached January 20th on the tenth evening after leaving our camp in the mountains, having traveled through snow and on foot for one hundred and sixty miles. I look upon the anxiety which induced me to set out from camp as an inspiration. Had I remained there waiting for the party that had been sent in, every man of us would have probably perished.

“The morning after reaching the Red River town, Godey and myself rode on to the Rio Hondo and Taos in search of animals and supplies, and on the second evening after that on which we reached the Red River, Godey had returned to that place with about thirty animals, provisions, and four Mexicans, with which he set out for camp on the following morning. On the road he received eight or ten others, which were turned over to him by the order of Major Beale, the commanding officer of the northern district of New Mexico. I expect that Godey will reach this place with the party on Wednesday evening the 31st. From Major Beale I received the offer of every aid in his power and such

actual assistance as he was able to render. Some horses, which he had just recovered from the Utahs, were loaned to us, and he supplied me from the commissary's department with provisions, which I could have had nowhere else. I find myself in the midst of friends. With Carson is living Owens, and Maxwell is at his father-in-law's doing a very prosperous business as a merchant and contractor for the troops. . . . Mr. St. Vrain and Aubrey, who have just arrived from Santa Fé, called to see me. I had the pleasure to learn that Mr. St. Vrain sets out from Santa Fé for St. Louis on the 15th of February. So that by him I have an early and certain opportunity of sending you my letters. Beale left Santa Fé on his journey to California on the 9th of this month. He probably carried on with him any letters which might have been at Santa Fé for me. I shall probably reach California with him or shortly after him. Say to your father that these are my plans for the future.

“At the beginning of February I shall set out for California, taking the southern route by the Rio Abajo, the Paso Del Norte and the south side of the Gila, entering California at the Agua Caliente, thence to Los Angeles and immediately north. I shall break up my party here and take with me only a few men. The survey has been uninterrupted up to this point, and I shall carry it on consecutively. As soon as possible after reaching California I will go on with the survey of the coast and coast country. Your father knows that this is an object of great desire with me, and I trust it is not too much to hope that he may obtain the countenance and aid

of the President (whoever he may be) in carrying it on effectually and rapidly to completion. For this I hope earnestly. I shall then be enabled to draw up a map and report on the whole country agreeably to our previous anticipations. *All my other plans remain entirely unaltered.* I shall take immediate steps to make ourselves a good home in California and to have a place ready for your reception, which I anticipate for April. My hopes and wishes are more strongly than ever turned that way. . . . Mr. St. Vrain dined with us today. Owens goes to Missouri in April to get married and thence by water to California. Carson is very anxious to go there with me now and afterward remove his family thither, but he cannot decide to break off from Maxwell and family connections.”

In a letter dated Taos, February 6th, 1849, Frémont tells of the tragic fate that befell the rest of his party:

“After a long delay, which had wearied me to the point of resolving to set out again myself, tidings have at last reached me of my ill-fated party. Mr. Haler came in last night, having the night before reached Red River settlement with some three or four others. Including Mr. King and Proue we have lost eleven of our party. Occurrences after I left them are briefly these, so far as they are within Haler’s knowledge. I say briefly, my dear Jessie, because now I am unwilling to force myself to dwell upon the particulars. I wish for a time to shut out these things from my mind, to leave this country and all thoughts and all things connected with recent events, which have been so signally disastrous

as absolutely to astonish me with a persistence of misfortune, which no precaution has been adequate on my part to avert. You will remember that I left camp with occupation sufficient to employ them for three or four days, after which they were to follow me down the river. Within that time I had expected relief from King, if it was to come at all.

“They remained where I left them seven days and then started down the river. Manuel—you will remember Manuel the Cosumne Indian—gave way to a feeling of despair after they had traveled about two miles, begged Haler to shoot him and then turned and made his way back to camp, intending to die there, as doubtless he soon did. They followed our trail down the river—twenty-two men they were in all. About ten miles below camp, Wise gave out, threw away his gun and blankets, and a few hundred yards further fell over in the snow and died. Two Indian boys, countrymen of Manuel, were behind. They rolled Wise up in his blanket and buried him on the river bank. No more died that day—none the next. Carver raved during the night, his imagination wholly occupied with images of many things, which he fancied himself eating. In the morning he wandered off from the party and probably soon died. They did not see him again. Sorel on this day gave out and lay down to die. They built him a fire and Morin, who was in a dying condition and snow blind, remained. These two did not probably last till the next morning. That evening, I think, Hubbard killed a deer. They traveled on, getting here and there a grouse, but probably nothing else, the snow having frightened

off the game. Things were desperate and brought Haler to the determination of breaking up the party in order to prevent them from living upon each other. He told them that he had done all he could for them, that they had no other hope remaining than the expected relief and their best plan was to scatter and make their way in small parties down the river, that for his part, if he was to be eaten, he would at all events be found traveling when he did die. They accordingly separated.

“With Mr. Haler continued five others and the two Indian boys. Rohrer now became very despondent; Haler encouraged him by recalling to his mind his family and urged him to hold out a little longer. On this day he fell behind, but promised to overtake them by evening. Haler, Scott, Hubbard, and Martin agreed that if any one of them should give out, the others were not to wait for him to die, but to build a fire for him and push on. At night Kern’s mess encamped a few hundred yards from Haler’s with the intention, according to Taplin, to remain where they were until relief should come, and in the meantime to live upon those who had died and upon the weaker ones as they should die. With the three Kerns were Cathcart, Andrews, McKie, Steperfeldt, and Taplin. Ferguson and Beadle had remained together behind. In the evening Rohrer came up and remained with Kern’s mess. Mr. Haler learned afterward from the men that Rohrer and Andrews wandered off the next day and died. They say they saw their bodies. In the morning Haler’s party continued on. After a few hours Hubbard gave out. They built him a fire, gathered him some

wood, and left him without, as Haler says, turning their heads to look at him as they went off. About two miles further Scott—you remember Scott, who used to shoot birds for you at the frontier—gave out. They did the same for him as for Hubbard and continued on. In the afternoon the Indian boys went ahead and before nightfall met Godey with the relief. Haler heard and knew the guns, which he fired for him at night, and starting early in the morning soon met him. I hear that they all cried together like children. Haler turned back with Godey and went with him to where they had left Scott. He was still alive and was saved. Hubbard was dead, still warm. From Kern's mess they learned of the death of Andrews and Rohrer, and a little above met Ferguson, who told them that Beadle had died the night before. Godey continued on with a few New Mexicans and pack mules to bring down the baggage from camp. Haler, with Martin and Bacon on foot and bringing Scott on horseback, have first arrived at Red River settlement. Provisions and horses for them to ride were left with the others, who preferred to rest on the river until Godey came back. At the latest they should all have reached Red River settlement last night and ought all to be here this evening. When Godey arrives I shall know from him all the circumstances sufficiently in detail to understand everything. But it will not be necessary to tell you anything further. It has been sufficient pain for you to read all that I have written.

“As I told you I shall break up my party here. I have engaged a Spaniard to furnish mules to take

my little party with our baggage as far down the Del Norte as Albuquerque. Tomorrow a friend sets out to purchase for me a few mules with which he is to meet me at Albuquerque and thence I continue my journey on my own animals. My road will take me down the Del Norte about one hundred and sixty miles below Albuquerque and then passes between the river and the head of the Gila, to a little Mexican town called, I think, Tusson (Tucson), thence to the mouth of the Gila and across the Colorado, direct to Agua Caliente into California. I intend to make the journey rapidly and about the middle of March hope for the great pleasure of hearing from home. I look for a large supply of newspapers and documents, more, perhaps, because these things have a home look about them than on their own account. When I think of you all I feel a warm glow at my heart, which renovates it like good medicine, and I forget painful feelings in strong hope for the future. We shall yet, dearest wife, enjoy quiet and happiness together—these are nearly one and the same to me now. I make frequently pleasant pictures of the happy home we are to have and oftenest and pleasantest of all I see our library with its bright fire in the rainy, stormy days and the large window looking out upon the sea in the bright weather. I have it all planned in my own mind. It is getting late now. La Harpe says there are two gods which are very dear to us, Hope and Sleep. My homage shall be equally divided between the two; both make the time pass lightly until I see you. So I go now to pay a willing tribute to one with my heart full of the other.”

As will be seen Frémont's fourth expedition terminated disastrously. He laid the blame for this on his guide, Bill Williams, who "proved never to have in the least known, or entirely to have forgotten, the whole region of country through which we were to pass." But regardless of his failure and misfortune his hope remained firm and the thoughts of a home in California lent a roseate hue to his dreams of the future. He continued on his way to the Coast, but not by the route he had originally intended to take. Instead he went further south into Mexico, avoiding the snows of the Rockies altogether. This was a wise decision. With his small party and unencumbered by unnecessary equipment and animals he traveled rapidly. Friends came to his assistance, and Francis Aubrey loaned him a thousand dollars, which made his trip less irksome. He stopped two days at Santa Fé, where he was entertained by Colonel Washington, the military Governor, who gave him material aid. He arrived at Socorro on the Rio Grande in February, 1849, being accompanied thus far by his good friend, Aubrey.

In February a public meeting was called in St. Louis to discuss a "National Road to the Pacific," and a resolution of thanks was adopted to "Colonel John C. Frémont for his intrepid perseverance and valuable scientific explorations in the regions of the Rocky and California mountains, by which we have been furnished with the knowledge of the passes and altitudes of these mountains and are now able to judge of the entire practicability of constructing a railroad over them from St. Louis to San Francisco." Of course Frémont knew nothing

of this resolution as he was journeying toward California.

At Socorro he breakfasted with the commander of the post, Colonel Buford, and departed for Tucson, which was then a Mexican military outpost. He followed down the Rio Grande until he arrived at a point where Hillsboro, New Mexico, now stands, whence he turned south, crossing the Mimbres Range to the Mimbres River. His course then lay in a westerly direction toward Lordsburg, New Mexico. He had a brush with the Indians the fourth day out. One of his men who was behind was fired at, but fortunately escaped injury. He saw two Indians ahead of him and rode over to them, accompanied by his interpreter. He told the Indians his name. They said they had never heard of him. He expressed great surprise and told them they ought to be ashamed not to recognize their best friend. By much persuasion he induced them to come to his camp. At first they were afraid to do so, knowing they had shot at one of his men, but he treated them with such civility they departed in a very amiable mood. Frémont thought them Apaches, the notorious tribe that so long waged war against both Mexicans and Americans. With the defeat of their leader, Geronimo, they were at last subdued.

The Colonel followed down the San Pedro River Valley, passed the deserted mission of Tabac, and on to Tucson in Arizona, at that time a town of about eight hundred souls, but now a flourishing city and a noted health resort. While on his way down the Gila Frémont first learned of the discovery of gold in California. Here he encountered a thou-

sand or more Sonora Mexicans on their way to the Golden State. Of the opinion that gold would be found on his Mariposa lands, the Colonel engaged a number of the Sonorans to work for him, he to "grub-stake" them and they to divide the results of their labors. However, the Americans, including the military Governor, so disliked these people that their stay was short, but in their dealings with Frémont it may be said that they always acted in an honest and honorable manner. He crossed the Colorado River near the mouth of the Gila River, and continued via Agua Caliente (Warner's) to Los Angeles.

As it was now close to the first of April he expected Mrs. Frémont's arrival soon, but owing to the rush to the mines the steamer that was to have left San Francisco for Panama was detained because of the absence of a crew and did not leave for several weeks, thus delaying hundreds of passengers. In Panama scores of people impatiently awaited the coming of the boat, and not being prepared for a sojourn in that region, suffered great inconvenience. Many of them lived in tents or managed to obtain some other means of shelter from the heat of the tropic sun. Mrs. Frémont was fortunate in having the aid of railway officials, the route for the road then being surveyed. By boat she went up the Chagres River as far as Gorgona and overland by mule train to Panama. Her escort considered her very brave during the trip.

"As there were no complaints or tears or visible breakdown," writes Mrs. Frémont, "he gave me high credit for courage, while the fact was the

whole thing was so like a nightmare that one took it as a bad dream—in helpless silence.”

In Panama the congestion grew worse. From some of New York's contingent Mrs. Frémont learned of the disaster that had overtaken the fourth expedition. She also received a letter from her distinguished husband written at Taos, in which the crushing calamity was graphically pictured. As everyone seemed certain that the Colonel would not get through to meet her she was advised to return to her home in Washington, but she paid no heed to the advice. A member of the Boundary Commission, Mr. Gray, brought her a paper one morning containing her father's account of the expedition's terrible experience. When he returned in the evening to convey additional news she sat with the unopened paper in her hand, a victim of congestion of the brain. She was unable to understand a word. A severe illness followed, during which she was cared for by Madame Arcé to whose home she was taken. At last the steamer from San Francisco arrived and she was able to proceed on her way. She received the best of care while on the boat, which, owing to the illness of the Captain, nearly met with misfortune. When the vessel arrived in San Diego Mrs. Frémont expected some word from her husband as had been understood between them. She was rejoiced to learn that he was in Los Angeles a short time before and had gone overland to San Francisco to meet the steamer when it should arrive. However, on reaching there she found that he had not come. The U. S. S. *Ohio* was in port and her commander, Captain Jones, who had previously

captured Monterey, only to be ordered to pull down the flag, offered her accommodations aboard his ship. She decided to accept the invitation of a Mr. Howard to stay at a club which occupied the residence of the former American Consul, Liedesdorf. The house was very charming with its well-kept gardens and afforded a pleasant retreat during the time of convalescence. While the servants were all Chinese a white woman waited upon Mrs. Frémont, but her services soon ended, as she insisted on having her mistress's gowns copied for herself and on being denied the privilege left the house in high dudgeon.

At that time San Francisco was the outfitting point for the mines, and things were in a rather chaotic condition. The price of food was exorbitant. The servants were mostly Indians, the whites being employed in washing out gold or in looking for new diggings. When Frémont arrived the all-absorbing question that perturbed both himself and wife was where they should live, as houses were at a premium in the San Francisco of '49. To have vegetables to eat one had to raise them himself, as did the commander of the post, General Riley, who gave Mrs. Frémont some samples from his own garden. The wife of General Canby, who was afterward killed by the Modocs, had a mulatto cook and gave to her friends an occasional loaf of excellent bread or a pan of biscuits.

Finding no suitable habitation the Frémonts went to Monterey, where they set up housekeeping in the wing of the big adobe occupied by the Governor. It was a very comfortable abiding place

with its thick walls and rose-bordered gardens. Despite the lack of conveniences they enjoyed life together very much. For a cook Frémont had with him Saunders, a free colored man, but on account of his desire to free his family by paying the sum of seventeen hundred dollars he was permitted to go to the mines, where he could earn the money. This left the Frémonts without a servant, but they wished Saunders to free his wife and children, as neither of them believed in slavery. The Sonorans who had been mining on Frémont's Mariposa lands now wished to go home on account of ill treatment. Up to this time they had sent the Colonel several sacks of gold, which were deposited in trunks in his Monterey quarters. The future looked so promising.

"Everything seemed to be against us up to a certain point," says Mrs. Frémont, "then the tide turned and it was indeed a flood of good fortune. All our plans had been made before the discovery of gold. We had expected to live the usual life of people going to a new country and had sent around all manner of useful things from a circular saw to a traveling carriage."

Theirs was to be a life on a cattle ranch. They prepared for this until the gold discovery changed their plans. Frémont's possession of the Mariposa tract provoked some unpleasant criticism, particularly after gold was discovered. Even at this late day there are alleged historians who take occasion to cast slurs at Frémont. For instance Josiah Royce says:

"How curious an accident this, that the con-

queror of California should by chance have purchased, before the discovery of gold in the territory, the only Mexican grant that covered any part of the gold region. . . . The gold mine had fallen to the hero and like all his other wonderful fortunes it profited him nothing.”

Had Royce been in any way acquainted, even remotely, with the career of John C. Frémont, he should have known that the Mariposa tract was not bought by the Colonel, but by Consul Larkin. Furthermore it was purchased in lieu of a mission farm which he very much wanted. Frémont was about the last man to learn of the discovery of gold and was obliged to put all his farm implements in storage with the new turn of events. Nor was he the “conqueror of California.” He never pretended to be the conqueror of anything. Nor did he pretend to be a hero. This was farthest from his thoughts. He was essentially an unassuming, upright, straightforward gentleman. Such slurs as the above were inspired by pure prejudice and a lack of knowledge of the facts in the case without which no man should attempt to write history. Concerning Royce’s slur a well-known writer says:

“It is perfectly plain that if gold in large quantities had not been discovered, Mariposa would have been at least a quarter of a century in arriving at any kind of a rich price, and the gold was discovered a year after the purchase. Frémont received the grant and paid for it; the land was therefore his, subject to confirmation by American law. Why should any one condemn him for this purely legitimate transaction? Even had he purchased it inten-

tionally and with the knowledge that it was rich in gold, there would be no dishonor in the matter as his assailants would have us believe. It was Frémont's to do with as he liked. Where, then, is the crime?"

Slurs on the Colonel, such as that above quoted, are made concerning the way California was taken away from Mexico, that by a lamb-like attitude the country could have been acquired without the firing of a gun had it not been for Frémont and the Bear Flag Party. The truth is the Californians yielded only when they were forced to do so, and it was Frémont who aided greatly in discouraging them and in bringing about a peace with comparatively little bloodshed. That a man of his courage and character should be subjected to the gibes of irresponsible historians is a matter of resentment to those of us who revere his memory.

It was while attending to his affairs connected with the Mariposa grant that Frémont received from President Taylor the appointment of Commissioner to run the boundary line between Mexico and the United States in the place of one of President Polk's appointees, John B. Weller of Ohio. The Colonel decided at once to accept the position, considering the action of the President as a distinct disapproval of the verdict of the court-martial of a few months before. Furthermore he was identified with the political party in opposition to President Taylor. This fact made him less reluctant to refuse the appointment than had he been an ardent supporter of the Chief Executive. He called upon Weller in Monterey and was informed that the

affairs of the commission were in a bad way through lack of money. However, he assisted Weller in raising some money, but on mature reflection declined the appointment.

Up to this time the territory of California had been ruled by a military government, but since the discovery of gold the population had increased by leaps and bounds and there was much opposition to what was called a "military despotism." It is not characteristic of the American people to be content with this form of government. Senator Benton in a letter addressed "To the People of California" advised them to get together, as did the Oregonians, and form a provisional government for themselves until such time as Congress should take action. The Benton idea met with popular favor and mass meetings were held in San Jose and San Francisco by advocates of this plan. However, General Riley, who succeeded Mason as military Governor, forestalled any action of the people by issuing a proclamation for a convention to draft a constitution. He called upon the inhabitants to select judges, prefects, etc., promising that those chosen should be appointed. There was much opposition to this in San Francisco, where it was thought the Governor had exceeded his authority and should not interfere. During the summer Riley made a tour of the mines, explaining the situation and urging the election of delegates to the convention. The time appointed for the meeting was August 1st, and the San Francisco opposition, though not recognizing Riley, decided to have its election on the same day for the sake of "expediency" and accord-

ingly the convention assembled in Monterey as the Governor had planned. Among the delegates were a number of men of prominence, including Larkin, Sutter, Stearns, Semple, Gwin, and several Californians in sympathy with the objects of the convention. The question of the boundary lines of the proposed new state provoked the most discussion. The southern members stood for a wide area in the hope, it is thought, of later dividing the state into several smaller ones, in which slavery might be established. California, as it stood, was to be a free state. The convention, giving to the territory its first constitution, closed with a grand ball in the evening, which is described by Bayard Taylor in the following graphic style:

“At eight o’clock—the fashionable ball hour in Monterey—the guests began to assemble and in an hour the hall was crowded. There were sixty or seventy ladies present and an equal number of gentlemen, in addition to members of the convention. The dark-eyed daughters of Monterey, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara mingled in pleasing contrast with the fairer blooms of the trans-Nevadan belles. The variety of feature and complexion was fully equaled by the variety of dress. In the whirl of the waltz, a plain, nun-like robe would be followed by one of pink satin and gauze; next, perhaps, a bodice of scarlet velvet with gold buttons and then a rich figured brocade, such as one sees on the stately dames of Titian. The dress of the gentlemen showed considerable variety, but was much less picturesque. White kids could not be had in Monterey for love or money and as much as fifty

dollars was paid by one gentleman for a pair of patent leather boots. Scarcely a single dress that was seen belonged entirely to the wearer, and, I thought, if the clothes had the power to leap severally back to their respective owners, some of the persons present would have been in a state of utter destitution."

The signing of the constitution was duly celebrated by a display of the national colors on Colton Hall and by a salute of thirty-one guns. Flags were flown from the ships in the harbor and even the British vessels were gaily decorated. Captain Sutter was brimming over with enthusiasm and with the tears streaming down his cheeks cried, "Gentlemen, this is the happiest day of my life." The delegates on the conclusion of their work marched in a body to the home of General Riley and tendered their congratulations, giving him three rousing cheers. The Governor then issued a proclamation calling for a general election on November 13th, when the state officials would be chosen, including members of the legislature. There were a number of candidates for governor, but Peter H. Burnett was the man who received the largest number of votes. The legislature assembled in San Jose, where those elected took the oath of office. On the afternoon of December 20th the legislature concerned itself with the election of two United States Senators. There were seven candidates and on the first ballot John C. Frémont was chosen. On the third ballot William M. Gwin won by the narrow margin of two votes. In her volume, "A Year of American Travel," Mrs. Frémont, who for obvious rea-

sons remained in Monterey during the time the Colonel was in San Jose, says:

“One evening of tremendous rain when we were as usual around the fire, Mrs. McEvoy with her table and lights, sewing at one side, myself by the other, explaining pictures from the *Illustrated Times* to my little girl, while the baby rolled about on the bearskin in front of the fire, suddenly Mr. Frémont came in upon us, dripping wet, as well he might be, for he had come through from San Jose, seventy miles on horseback through the heavy rain. . . . He came to tell me that he had been elected Senator and that it was necessary we should go to Washington on the steamer of the first of January, 1850.”

The Colonel rode back to San Jose the following morning on the same horse that had brought him, covering one hundred and forty miles in thirty-six hours.

Frémont's servant, Saunders, had made enough in the mines to free his family and to buy a home. He was a very happy individual when he again joined the Frémonts on their way to Washington.

On the trip to Panama Mrs. Frémont was taken ill, and unfortunately her husband was in a similar condition, suffering from rheumatic fever in one of his legs that had been subjected to severe cold in the San Juan Mountains on his last expedition. Mrs. Frémont was attended by a Navy surgeon, Doctor Bowie, and they were both taken to the home of Madame Arcé at Panama. Here they remained until the next steamer sailed for New York, which was nearly a month afterward. It was a question

with travelers at this time whether to risk the tomahawk of the Indian by going overland to California, or take chances with Chagres fever by crossing the Isthmus. Mrs. Frémont was carried across country to the Chagres River, down which she was transported by boat to the steamer. But the trials and tribulations of the two were by no means ended. As the month was March the reputation of this particular season of the year was well sustained. The wind blew and blew and the seas gathered in increasing force, sweeping the vessel from stem to stern. Mrs. Frémont was forced to undergo the unpleasant experience of being lashed to a sofa, which itself performed some remarkable gyrations. Her condition was not impaired by the voyage, however, but according to her own statement "she should have died by all the laws of medicine."

Immediately on their arrival they went at once to Washington, where Frémont and his colleague, Gwin, prepared to present the new state to the Union. President Taylor, by special message, submitted the constitution of California to Congress. The Senators and Representatives had prepared a memorial in which the history of the territory was reviewed, the military occupation, the discovery of gold, the rapidly increasing population, etc. It was explained that the need of a state government was imperative, that those of the East could appreciate the position of the people and the necessity for action by Congress in admitting California into the sisterhood of states.

That the people of that region had the presumption to organize a government without the consent

of Congress was bitterly denounced by some Southern representatives. There were numerous heated debates over the question of slavery, though this matter was temporarily adjusted by the "Compromise of 1850." It was some years afterward before the slave issue was definitely settled. Thus California was admitted to statehood on September 9th, 1850.

Naturally the citizens of the new state anxiously awaited the action of Congress. There was much impatience and a great deal of speculation as to what should be done in case California was refused admittance. There was some talk of an independent state in that event. It was hoped that each steamer to arrive would have some definite news, but vessel after vessel came in without any information to impart. At length the *Oregon* appeared, decorated with bunting and bearing a flag on which was inscribed, "California Is a State." The steamer entered the Golden Gate on the morning of October 18th and fired her cannon to give notice of her arrival. Her lavish display of color was quickly observed and the good news was signaled to the city from Telegraph Hill. As the *Oregon* rounded Clark's Point her bell was rung continually and the multitude on shore sent up a mighty cheer, which continued until she had cast anchor. The whole town congregated on the waterfront and a scene of great animation was witnessed. Men, women, and children were beside themselves with joy, and San Francisco prepared to celebrate in a way that has been characteristic of her ever since. A new star had been added to the flag—a star particularly dear

to the people whose enthusiasm was unbounded. From every window the colors fluttered in the breeze. Streamers of bunting covered every building. The ships in the harbor were flying the flags of all nations. In Portsmouth Square two large cannon proclaimed in thunderous tones the admission of California into the Union. Extra editions of the newspapers appeared, which sold from one to five dollars a copy. With the coming of night the heavens were lighted by the fire of countless rockets. Red fire illuminated the various streets, while on the top of the hills, of which there are many, the merry bonfires blazed and sparkled until daybreak. Messengers on foot and on horseback hastened to convey the good news to other parts of the state, and in an incredibly short time nearly everyone knew it.

However, San Francisco was not satisfied with this celebration, but decided to hold another of a more formal nature, which occurred on October 29th. A long procession composed of nearly the entire population marched through the streets to the accompaniment of martial music and popular songs. The town was again decorated, the Chinese being conspicuous with their Oriental colors. There was much noise and hilarity and the cannon were fired at close intervals. There was an oration in the plaza, the speaker being Judge Nathaniel Bennett. An ode written for the occasion by Mrs. Wills was sung by a large choir. On Telegraph Hill and Rincon Point huge bonfires were burning, while at night most of the houses were brightly illuminated. In the evening a grand ball was held

with three hundred ladies and five hundred gentlemen in attendance. Dancing was kept up until the stars waned and the dawn rode in on waves of gold.

CHAPTER XII

Frémont Undertakes a Fifth Expedition

Despite some opposition from Jefferson Davis the two California Senators, Frémont and Gwin, were sworn in and took their respective places as members of the United States Senate. To determine which of the two should take the short term they drew lots and unfortunately the lesser one fell to Frémont, but in the short space of time in which he had to act he presented a number of bills beneficial to California.

As his time was limited he devoted himself in the main to the matters he considered the most pressing, designed to complete the political organization of the state. In September he introduced a bill regulating the working and discovery of gold mines, a bill authorizing the President to appoint Indian agents, to extend the judicial system of the United States to California, a bill to grant the state public lands for educational purposes, to provide for a good road across the continent, a bill to relinquish to the city of San Francisco certain public grounds no longer needed for public purposes and a bill to grant six townships for a university, and several others of equal importance. He made few lengthy speeches in behalf of any of these measures, the longest being on the Indian Agent bill and the one governing the mines, to which a substitute was offered by a Michigan Senator, but Frémont's carried unanimously.

According to Bigelow the Colonel displayed great clearness and precision of statement in his few forensic efforts and established a reputation for modesty, good sense, and integrity among his associates in the Senate. One incident happened to mar the otherwise peaceful concord of the body and one that only increased the respect his brother Senators felt for his manly qualities. On one occasion Senator Foote of Mississippi, who was in a slightly intoxicated condition, said in the course of his remarks on the Naval Appropriation bill that the Republic would be dishonored if some of the legislation urged upon the Senate from California were consummated. This speech fired Frémont and an altercation ensued between the two in which Foote struck at the Colonel but missed him. For a time it looked as though serious trouble would result, but in a letter to the *Baltimore Sun* Frémont disposed of the matter in a way that placed Foote in a not altogether pleasant position.

About this time the Colonel was invited to attend the Mississippi and Pacific Railroad convention due to assemble in Philadelphia for the purpose of discussing a national wagon road across the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada. The road was intended as a means of stimulating interest in the much talked of Pacific Railway. Frémont was not in a physical condition to accept, but wrote a letter of some length, explaining his views in detail. An extract follows:

“Many lines of exploration through the wilderness country from our inhabited frontier to the Pacific Ocean have conclusively satisfied me that

the region, or belt of country lying between the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth parallels of latitude, offer singular facilities and extraordinary comparative advantages for the construction of the proposed road. . . . Throughout that great extent of country, stretching in each way about seventeen degrees, all these apparently continuous ranges are composed of lengthened blocks of mountains, separate and detached, of greater or less length, according to the magnitude of the chain which they compose—each one possessing its separate, noted, and prominent peak and lying parallel to each other, though not usually so the general direction of the range, but in many cases lying diagonally across it. Springing suddenly up from the general level of the country, sometimes rising into bare and rocky summits of great heights, they leave openings through the range but little above the general level, by which they can be passed without climbing a mountain. Generally these openings are wooded valleys where the mountain springs from either side collect together, forming often the main branches of some mighty stream. Aggregated together in this way, they go to form the great chain of the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada as well as the secondary ranges, which occupy the intervening space. With the gradual discovery of this system, I became satisfied, not only of the entire practicability but of the easy construction of a railroad across this rugged region. . . . The snows are less formidable than would be supposed from the great elevation of the central part of the route. They are dry and therefore more readily passed through, are

thin in the valleys and remain only during a brief winter. . . . In conclusion I have to say that I believe in the practicability of this work and that every national consideration requires it to be done and to be done at once and as a national work by the United States.”

With the conclusion of the session Frémont went immediately to California, taking the Panama route. Again he was stricken with Chagres fever and was unable to return to Washington on time. In 1851 he became a candidate for reëlection, supported by the Free State Party. Gwin was a champion of pro-slavery and this sentiment had grown to astounding proportions, so much so, indeed, that the Colonel, who was an ardent abolitionist, was defeated. However, no successor was elected, the matter being deferred until the next legislature should convene. To the pro-slavery faction he represented everything that was dangerous and visionary and they made a hard fight against him.

Frémont now interested himself in the Mariposa tract, the boundaries of which had not been definitely fixed. Nor had the title been confirmed by the American government. In 1851 a law was passed by Congress repudiating all titles and denying confirmation only upon written proofs of ownership. For some six years these matters remained in a chaotic state as the archives of the former Mexican Government were in boxes in Benicia and were not available to anyone. Land forgers flourished under these conditions and there was no end of rascality.

The Mexicans were a simple, childlike people

and were as clay in the hands of the scheming, unscrupulous American, who took every advantage of their credulity. Some of the choicest tracts of land in the state were covered by many of these old Mexican grants with their uncertain boundaries. The prospective land seeker settled anywhere his fancy led him and he could be expelled only at the point of a gun. Taxes were demanded regardless of title and the lands and mining claims were greatly confused and jumbled. Then, too, the Indians became aroused over the encroachment of the miners, who muddied the streams from which they caught their fish, and in consequence threatened trouble. The pastoral life of the missions with its picturesqueness and charm was over. It was a strenuous time of hurry and clamor and a fierce rush for wealth. Morals counted for very little in the California of that time. Gambling and drunkenness, with daring robberies and foul murders, were almost a daily occurrence in San Francisco. All was excitement and the number of duels and personal encounters was appalling.

Frémont soon found that new complications threatened his Mariposa land. The question was whether or not the gold went with the property. This had not been determined. However, he sold some leases on the Mariposa to Thomas D. Sargent, who had examined the claims and who went to London, where he sold them at a great profit. Benton, who had power of attorney, suggested that Sargent should take over all the land for a million dollars. After making his first payment Sargent returned to England where he made arrangements

for the sale of the property at a great advance over what he had paid for it. Previous to this Frémont had arranged with an agent, David Hoffman, for sales of his claims in London and when Sargent heard of the Hoffman deal he wrote to the Colonel at once protesting against such a proceeding. Frémont then ordered the entire matter to be held in abeyance as the question of title was in jeopardy.

With the recovery of his health the Colonel decided to fulfill some government contracts by distributing a large number of beef cattle among numerous Indian tribes who were in a starving condition in the mountains where they had gone to escape persecution. This action was expected to pacify them for a time and Frémont went to the southern part of the state, where he superintended the movement of delivering something over a million pounds of beef on hoof, but with his usual ill luck the United States Commissioners, who had arranged the matter, could not get the money to pay for this as Congress said it was not authorized. It required the passage of a special bill before the Colonel could get his money, which necessitated a wait of three years. The amount paid with interest came to two hundred and forty thousand dollars.

During his absence in California his Washington home took fire and burned to the ground, but Mrs. Frémont managed to save most of his papers, together with many valuables. He then went East and in March, 1852, arrived in New York, from which city he and his family sailed on the *Africa* for England. He found that his fame there was as great as in America. In London he received many

social attentions, among them being a presentation at the Queen's Drawing Room and an invitation to attend the annual dinner given in honor of the Duke of Wellington's birthday. In writing of the former affair Frémont's daughter, Elizabeth, says:

“When mother finally entered the Royal Drawing Room, she beheld Queen Victoria with the Prince Consort, Albert Edward, at her side, a picture of devotion. There were more guests present at that drawing room than usual and, perhaps, more representatives of the nobility than are usually gathered together on such an occasion. Among the distinguished persons of the day was the Duke of Wellington, a man well on in years, his silver hair lighting up his face in a striking manner. . . . A memorable figure of that presentation was the great Duke of Wellington. He walked back and forth behind the throne, a privilege accorded only to Wellington, all others being forbidden to either move or speak in the presence of the Queen. By a strange coincidence, back of the throne was a picture representing one of the battles of the first Napoleon—the work of a master hand and so lifelike that one could hear in fancy the din of war. As Wellington walked back and forth in front of this picture he seemed to be lost in thought. Was he living over again the scenes of that terrific conflict? The thought was insistent and impressive. During the presentation my mother was self-possessed, trying hard to remember every historic personage and incident that, like a panorama, was floating before her, that she might write the details to her dearly loved father at eventide,

for never was the day so busy nor the way so weary that the setting sun did not see a letter penned to her father, so that even though distance separated them they were always one at nightfall. To my father the presentation scene was like a wedding, for as he naïvely put it in later years, the men were of no importance at all. The ladies had the day and they claimed it for their own. But on this day father was the center of a group of Englishmen intent upon hearing of America and that wonderful new country and of the taking of California. He was not looked upon as a stranger by these men as he has been made a gold medalist of the Royal Geographical Society in honor of his Western explorations.”

Only one unpleasant incident occurred to mar the Colonel's visit to England. One evening when he was leaving the Clarendon Hotel in company with his wife to attend a dinner he was arrested. He told the officers that there must be a mistake, but they paid no heed to any explanation and hurried him off to prison. Mrs. Frémont immediately informed their host of the delay and went herself to the residence of the American Minister, who, unfortunately, was not at home, having gone to the same dinner to which the Frémonts were invited. The Colonel was forced to spend the night in prison and the following day George Peabody furnished the bail essential to his freedom. His arrest, it seems, was for the non-payment of four drafts, amounting to \$19,500 drawn by the Colonel in 1847 on James Buchanan, Secretary of State, for supplies bought for the California Battalion when Frémont was military Governor. Buchanan was unable to

meet the obligation, as Congress had failed to make the necessary appropriation. The Englishmen, who had invested money in the "paper," decided to take summary action against the Colonel, hence the trouble. Buchanan's testimony, as given in Philadelphia for the British Court, exonerated Frémont from any wrongdoing and the matter was finally adjusted to the satisfaction of all concerned.

While in Paris the Frémonts obtained the home of Lady Dundonald situated on the Champs Elysees, midway between the Arc de Triomphe and Ronde Pointe. Before leaving London Mrs. Frémont received word that her young brother, Randolph, had died. It will be remembered that he accompanied the Colonel on his first expedition. The news affected her very much. Her eyes became infected from constant weeping and she was threatened with blindness.

While in Paris Mrs. Frémont drove the first pair of English horses ever driven there, except those owned by the Emperor. The Colonel bought them as a birthday present for his wife and on leaving there they were sent to a friend in Bucharest. From the balcony of the house they occupied the family watched the triumphant entry of the Prince President, Napoleon III, as the Emperor of the French on Napoleon's day. The Emperor rode alone, no one being within one hundred and twenty feet of him. He refused a bodyguard, saying that "if I die at the hands of an assassin I die alone." The Emperor was followed by a number of men who had served under the great Napoleon. The Colonel had invited a number of friends to witness the entry and

the police required that the name of every invited guest should be filed with them, so great was the precaution taken. Frémont was very much surprised to note the appearance at the last moment of the widow of Commodore Stewart, who had not been invited and who had brought with her two men known to be "reds" by the authorities. The Colonel quietly notified the police and detectives were sent to watch the unbidden guests without their knowledge. Thus the affair passed off without any untoward incident occurring. Mrs. Stewart also brought with her a young lad named Charles Stuart Parnell, who afterward became the great Irish leader.

In decorating the house for Frémont's birthday the family greatly disturbed the serenity of the servants, who refused to remain even for "American wages," as it was against their principles to stay in a house that celebrated the death of Louis XVI. After it was satisfactorily explained to them that the occasion was Frémont's birthday and not an honor to the departed king, peace was restored in the household. The Colonel had a keen sense of humor as will be seen by the following anecdote:

"There was a riding school in Paris that offered diversion to my father, who always enjoyed a joke. Anxious for excitement, father one day called on the riding master and announced that he was ready to begin to learn the art of riding horseback. The Frenchman went through many simple strides with his new pupil to the intense delight of my father until one day the horse acted a bit too wild for a novice to handle and my father was compelled to

show that he had handled the reins before. The Frenchman was astounded. 'You have ridden before!' he cried, laughing at the joke upon himself. And after that he and my father enjoyed many a ride together, father the teacher, showing how the horses were ridden when the pathway was cleared over the plains."

On their return to Washington the Frémonts rented a house adjacent to that of Senator Benton. Congress had recently ordered the lines of a survey to be made "for Overland travel and the prospective railway route." As no name appeared in the bill, Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, appointed Captain Gunnison to do the work, no doubt being prejudiced against the Colonel because of his opposition to slavery. On account of his failure in 1849 Frémont was more than ever determined to try it again and with his own funds and some furnished by Senator Benton, prepared for another journey of exploration in the Western mountains. He began his preparations in August, 1853, intending to make his trip in the winter time that he "might see all the worst—see the real difficulties and determine whether they could be vanquished." He believed in the practicability of the road and that his mistake in 1849 was the fault of his guide and was determined to find out these things by actual test. The trip was really a continuation of his fourth. The party was composed of twenty-two members, ten Delaware chiefs being among them, one of whom had been with Frémont before. The topographer was Egloffstein, with Strobel and Oliver Fuller, assistants. The artist and daguerreo-

typist was S. N. Carvalho, who wrote a book describing the movements of the expedition up to the Mormon town of Parowan. The writings of Carvalho offer the only source of information obtainable regarding the trip as Frémont wrote nothing save a short article, though doubtless he would have told the whole story had there been a second volume of "Memoirs."

Carvalho, Fuller, Egloffstein and a photographer named Bomar joined Frémont in St. Louis in September, 1853, and journeyed together to Kansas City on the steamer *F. X. Aubrey*. The baggage was sent to Westport, a former outfitting point of the Colonel in days gone by. A contest took place between Carvalho and Bomar in regard to the best process in making pictures. The former won, therefore Bomar was shelved as a useless member of the party. The men were well provided with firearms, each carrying a rifle and pistol. The Delawares, who were very fond of Frémont, were to join the expedition a hundred miles to the west, after they had gone to their homes to make the necessary preparations. To each mule was apportioned from sixty-five to ninety pounds of baggage. No wagons were used. Personal baggage was restricted in weight, Frémont having had sufficient experience to avoid loading the men down.

A start was made, the party stopping for the night at the Methodist Mission. The next day they traveled on to the Shawnee Mission, where Max Strobel joined them. The Colonel being indisposed decided to return to Westport to make some more purchases. He was accompanied by Strobel and the

understanding with the others was that they should go on until they reached the Delawares, there to await his arrival.

The caravan of men and mules moved westward on September 24th and in a few days reached the Delawares, who were described by Carvalho as a "noble set of Indians, six feet high and armed cap-à-pie under command of Captain Wolf." They had no more than joined the Delawares when Strobel arrived with a note from Frémont, stating that it was necessary for him to seek medical advice in St. Louis. He ordered the men to proceed to the Saline Fork of the Kansas River, where the buffalo were numerous and where they should await him. These instructions were followed out. It was during his temporary absence that he received his first nomination for the Presidency. The men had been discussing available candidates around the camp fire. Carvalho spoke of the Colonel as being excellent Presidential timber, whereupon everyone present expressed similar views, so he was nominated by acclamation.

Captain Gunnison, who had received the appointment Frémont expected to get, had preceded him into the region by several months, making an examination for the prospective Central Pacific Railroad. However, previous to the Colonel's actual departure, Gunnison and Kern—the latter having been with Frémont on his expedition of 1848—and Croitzfeldt, another of his old men, were killed by Ute Indians near Sevier Lake, Utah, on the 25th of October.

Near the end of the same month the Frémont

camp was beginning to anticipate his return from St. Louis, expecting his arrival from hour to hour.

"During the day of October 30th," writes Mr. Carvalho, "the sun was completely obscured by low, dark clouds. The atmosphere was filled with a most disagreeable and suffocating smoke, which rolled over our heads. We were still encamped on the Saline Fork of the Kansas River, impatiently awaiting the arrival of Colonel Frémont, who had not yet returned from St. Louis. His continued absence alarmed us for his safety and the circumstance that the prairies had been on fire for several days past in the direction through which he must pass to reach us added to our anxiety. Night came on and the dark clouds, which overhung us like an immense pall, now assumed a horrible lurid glare all along the horizon. As far as the eye could reach a belt of fire was visible. We were on the prairie, between the Kansas River on one side and Solomon's Fork on the other and Salt Creek on the third and a large belt of woods about four miles from camp on the fourth. We were thus completely hemmed in and comparatively secure from danger. Our animals were grazing near this belt of woods the day before and when they had been driven into camp at night one of the mules was missing. At daylight a number of Indians, Egloffstein and myself sallied out in search of it. After looking through the woods for an hour we discovered our mule lying dead with the lariat drawn close around his neck. It had been loose and, trailing along the ground, had become entangled in the branches of an old tree and in his endeavor to extricate himself

he was strangled. We were attracted to the spot by the howling of wolves and we found that he had been partially devoured by them. Our engineer, who wanted a wolf skin for a saddle cloth, determined to remain to kill one of them. I assisted him to ascend a high tree immediately over the body of the mule and untied the lariat and attaching his rifle to one end of it he pulled it up to him. The rest of the party returned to camp. About four o'clock in the afternoon, he being still out, I roasted some buffalo meat and went to seek him. I found him still in the tree quietly waiting his opportunity to kill a wolf. He declined to come down. I told him to what danger he was exposing himself and entreated him to return to camp. Finding him determined to remain I sent up his supper and returned to camp, expecting him to be in by sundown. The prairies were now on fire just beyond the belt of woods and through which he had to pass. Becoming alarmed for Egloffstein several went to bring him in. We found him half way to camp dragging by the lariat the dead body of an immense wolf he had shot. We assisted him on with his booty as well as we could. My guard came in at two o'clock. I lay down to take a three hours' rest. When I went on duty the scene that presented itself was sublime. A breeze had sprung up, which dissipated the smoke to windward. The full moon was shining brightly and the piles of clouds, which surrounded her, presented studies of light and shadow, which Claude Lorraine so loved to paint. The fire had reached the belt of woods and had already burned part of the tree our friend had been

seated in all day. The fire on the north side had burned up to the water's edge and there stopped. The whole horizon now seemed bounded by fire; our Delawares by this time had picketed all the animals near the creek we were camped on and all the baggage of the camp safely carried down the bank near the water. When day dawned the magnificent woods, which had sheltered our animals, now appeared a forest of black, scathed trunks. When the fire gradually increased around us we dared not change our ground; first because we saw no point where there was not more danger than where we were; second if we moved away the Indian chief, Solomon, who, after conducting us to the camp ground we now occupied had returned to guide Colonel Frémont, would not know exactly where to find us again. Just after breakfast one of the Delawares gave a loud whoop and pointed to the burning prairies before us, where, to our great joy, we saw Colonel Frémont, followed by an immense man, who proved to be the doctor, on an immense mule and the Indian chief and his servant, galloping through the blazing element in the direction of our camp. Instantly, with one accord, all the men discharged their rifles in a volley; our tents were struck and we wanted to make a signal for their guidance. We all reloaded and when they were very near we fired a salute. Our men and Indians immediately surrounded Colonel Frémont with kind inquiries as to his health. No father, who had been absent from his children, could have been received with more enthusiasm and real joy. To reach us he had to travel over fifty miles of country

which had been on fire. The Indian trail which led to our camp from Solomon's Fork being obliterated, it was most difficult and arduous to follow it, but the keen sense of the Indian directed him under all difficulties directly to the spot where he had left us. During the balance of the day we put the camp in traveling order. With the arrival of the Colonel our provisions had received considerable additions, more in fact than he had any good reason to suppose we had consumed during his absence. During the night the fire crossed the Kansas River and was directly approaching our camp. At daylight our animals were all packed, the camp raised, and all the men in their saddles. Our only escape was through the burning grass. We dashed into it, Colonel Frémont at the head, his officers following, while the rest of the party were driving up the baggage animals. The distance we rode through the blazing fire could not have been more than one hundred feet — the grass which quickly ignites as quickly consumes, leaving only black ashes in the rear. We passed through the fiery ordeal unscathed; made that day over the burnt ravines about fifteen miles and camped for the night on the dry bed of a creek beyond the reach of the devouring elements."

After journeying a few days the party arrived at Bent's Fort. They had lost five animals. There was a village of Chéyennes near Bent's consisting of about one hundred and fifty lodges and here they found the missing mules and horses. They had been stolen by these Indians. At the fort they obtained two tepees, large enough for the entire company, though Frémont purchased a small one for himself.

Among other things bought here were robes and moccasins. They remained at Bent's nearly a week, replenishing their equipment. The big doctor returned to St. Louis as his services were no longer needed. The party proceeded up the Arkansas, passing Huerfano Butte. They entered the mountains on December 3rd, crossing the Wet Mountain Range and by way of Sand Hill Pass traversed the Sangre de Cristo, descending into San Luis Valley, where they picked up the trail of Gunnison, who had preceded them. They traveled up the big valley and made their camp on Sawatch Creek, which comes down from Cochetope Pass. They camped here for a number of days, hunting deer in this natural park land. So far they had met with no snow and had traveled slowly, awaiting winter weather. The ground was dry, making travel easy to the pass. When the Colonel reached Cochetope on December 14th he found his wish for wintry weather fully gratified. The snow, though light in the pass, was nearly three feet deep on the higher ridges. Cochetope Pass has an elevation of nine thousand and eighty-eight feet. It was to this point that Frémont should have gone in 1848 had it not been for his determination to find some other way by the head of the Rio Grande. The pass has been described as a "wonderful gap, or more properly speaking, a natural gate as its name denotes in the Utah language. On each side mountains rise in abrupt and rocky precipices. Cochetope signifies Buffalo Gate and the Mexicans have the same name for it, *El Puerto de los Cibolos*." It is, perhaps, needless to say that many thousands of buffaloes

once traveled it, as it bears the imprint of their sharp hoofs.

On leaving the pass the party followed down a creek to a river which bears the name of Gunnison. Arriving at White Earth Creek they made a short cut to the Uncompahgre River, later coming to the Gunnison and following it to the Grand. They continued their way along the Grand for a time, then crossed the arid plains to the west, finally arriving at what is now Gunnison Valley in Utah. They crossed the Green River near the mouth of the San Rafael, ascending this stream for some distance when they turned south along the edge of the San Rafael Swell and came to a river named after Frémont by Major Powell in 1871. He then turned west up Frémont River to Rabbit Valley, Utah, thence to Grass Valley, thence down Otter Creek to the east fork of the Sevier and on to Circle Valley. His course then lay south up the Sevier, where he crossed some mountains to the west, through which is Frémont Pass, arriving at the California road a short distance above the settlement of Parowan.

“From the time that Frémont diverged from Gunnison’s trail,” writes Dellenbaugh, “just before reaching Green River, till he arrived at Circle Valley on the Sevier, or even at Frémont Pass, he was again something of a ‘pathfinder’ for he traveled new ground. There may have been a branch of the Spanish Trail in this direction, as suggested on some old maps, in which case he may have traveled its course part of the time, but on the War Department map of 1860 the region he is now traversing and much more, was represented by a blank. It

continued to be so represented on authentic maps till the Powell survey explored and mapped it in 1869-1875."

In making their way through Grand River Valley it became necessary to climb steep mountains covered with two or three feet of snow. When the party was half way up a pack mule lost his footing and fell over a precipice, carrying with him nearly everyone in his immediate vicinity. Mr. Carvalho was thrown from his horse, which went tumbling down the mountainside for several hundred feet, but was fortunately unharmed.

The weather grew very cold, Carvalho reporting thirty degrees below zero at daylight. They were now in the unknown mountains, in an unexplored region where it took sublime courage to proceed. Moreover, it was midwinter with all that the term implies—keen, searching winds, bitter cold nights and falling snow, without a trace or track of any evidence of civilization. What utter wildness! What pictures rise in the mind at the thought of them breaking their way across the snow-mantled ranges and threading the tortuous course of wild and rugged canyons.

CHAPTER XIII

Hunger and Hardships

Gradually the supply of food grew less and the Delawares went out in search of game, returning with a young, fat horse they had killed—one of a drove of wild horses observed by members of the caravan some miles distant. Horse meat was considered a rare delicacy by the men and this one was especially relished, being in much finer condition than those in the pack train. Footprints of the Utes were also discovered by the Delawares, which caused the Colonel to make a personal inspection of all firearms carried by the party. He also warned the men to keep their guns in perfect order.

“Suddenly it occurred to me,” says Carvalho, “that my double-barreled gun might be out of order. I had used it as a walking stick in descending the mountain—that day the snow was so deep that I was obliged to resort to that course to ascend myself. I quietly went to the place where I had laid it down and attempted to fire it off; both caps snapped. The quick ear of Colonel Frémont heard the caps explode. He approached me very solemnly and gave me a lecture, setting forth the consequences, which might have resulted from a sudden attack of Indians on our camp. ‘Under present circumstances, Mr. Carvalho,’ he said, ‘I should have to fight for you.’ His rebuke was merited and had its effect throughout the camp, for all the men were most particular afterwards in keeping their arms in perfect order.”

Very soon they came to a village of Utes containing a large number of lodges. The men of the tribe were mostly armed with rifles, but appeared quite friendly. During the evening presents were made to the Indians—blankets, knives, tobacco, etc. About nine o'clock, after a double guard had been placed around the animals and the men were enjoying some roast venison, loud voices were heard as though a burial ceremony was going on. Women could be heard weeping and wailing, and in a short time the whole Indian population came into camp headed by a half-breed, who spoke Spanish. It seems that the young horse killed by the Delawares the previous evening was said to be the property of one of the squaws, who thought a great deal of it and a settlement was demanded. The Colonel remained in his lodge and would not see the Indians, but had one of his men inform them that it was not right to have killed the horse and that he would pay the owner whatever she thought it was worth. Having seen the various articles of the party the Indians wanted nearly everything, including a keg of gunpowder. Frémont, thinking he was being held up, absolutely refused to meet the demands, holding on to every grain of powder. Then the Utes became very abusive and threatened to attack, but the Colonel defied them. After much parleying they were finally pacified and departed near daylight.

“The next camp was on Grand River, and while at supper, the alarm was given that Indians were coming. Everything was made ready to receive them. A band of sixty Utes armed with rifles, bows

and arrows, bedecked with feathers and gay with red and yellow blankets, came galloping into camp. They also demanded payment for the horse the Delawares had killed and for which settlement had already been made. It would appear that the animal was in the nature of community property, belonging to every tribe in that region. The Indians said that the squaw who claimed the horse was not the rightful owner, but that it belonged to one of the warriors present. They threatened that unless they were paid many blankets, knives, and much powder they would begin immediate hostilities. On such occasions the Colonel did not show himself, the Indians having more respect for the Great Captain, as he was called, if he remained in his lodge. Nor did he communicate personally with them, which gave him an opportunity to think over what course he should pursue and at the same time "lent a mysterious importance to his messages."

Carvalho was very much alarmed and going to the Colonel's lodge told him of the threats made by the Indians. Frémont announced his determination not to submit to such an imposition and merely laughed at the talk of complete annihilation of his party. He appeared as calm as though ordering his breakfast, in direct contrast to the frightened man whose face betrayed his anxiety. Frémont said further that he was a student of Indian character and expressed a doubt if there was enough powder in the entire band of Utes to load a single rifle. He reasoned that if they had any ammunition they would have surrounded and massacred the party and stolen what they were then demanding and parleying for. This

was a rather sensible way to look at the situation and Carvalho at once took a different viewpoint. Tearing a leaf from his journal the Colonel handed it to his messenger, saying, "Here, take this, and place it against a tree at a distance near enough to hit every time. Discharge your Colt's six-shooter—fire at intervals of ten to fifteen seconds and call the attention of the Indians to the fact that it is not necessary for the white men to load their arms."

After the first shot was fired the Indians pointed to their own rifles as much as to say they could do the same thing, but when Carvalho fired a second shot without lowering his weapon they were startled. At the third shot they were curious and slightly amazed. For the fourth shot the pistol was placed in the hands of the chief, who fired, hitting the paper. Two other Indians fired the remaining shots whereon Carvalho substituted another gun and, after firing a few shots, convinced the Indians that they were at the mercy of Frémont's men, who could kill them off in a twinkling of an eye. After this they completely forgot their original demands and suggested that they were willing to exchange some horses for blankets. This was done, but the animals purchased proved worthless except for food. As it was nearly dark the Indians asked to remain in camp, a request which was granted, though eleven men stood guard all armed and extremely watchful. The Indians, who, no doubt, had planned to steal some horses during the night were disappointed. They quietly stole away the following morning, when Frémont energetically exclaimed: "The price of safety is eternal vigi-

lance." In speaking of the Colonel's demeanor while on this expedition Carvalho says:

"Colonel Frémont never forgot that he was a gentleman; not an oath; no boisterous ebullitions of temper. Calmly and collectedly he gave his orders and they were invariably fulfilled to the utmost of the men's ability. He would often entertain us, before the extreme hardships began, with his adventures on different expeditions. Although on the mountains and away from civilization, Colonel Frémont's lodge was sacred from all that was immodest, light or trivial; each and all of us entertained the highest regard for him. The greatest etiquette and deference was always paid him, although he never ostensibly required it. Yet his reserved and unexceptionable deportment demanded from us the same respect with which we were always treated and which we ever took pleasure in reciprocating."

In crossing Grand River they experienced much difficulty as in the swift current the water was not frozen over, but ran with great velocity. It was about six feet deep and some two hundred yards in width, with heavy ice along the banks. To prevent the horses from slipping a quantity of sand was sprinkled over the ice. The pack animals were first driven into the sweeping flood and swam to the opposite bank. Then the riders entered, Frémont leading the way. Naturally their clothing was soon water soaked and froze quickly after they had made the crossing. Around a fire which the Delawares had made the men dried their apparel and warmed themselves after their frigid bath.

As game was scarce it was impossible to add to their store of provisions and in consequence the commissary was reduced to almost nothing. At last it became necessary to kill one of their faithful horses. This was regarded as a great sacrifice—a solemn event rendered more so by the impressive words addressed to them by Frémont. Calling the men together he told them to what extremity he had been reduced on a former expedition when from sheer starvation the men ate one another. He made them swear that under no circumstance would they resort to cannibalism, but would live and die without preying on their comrades. Twenty-two men with bowed heads took the solemn vow "So help me God." They knelt in the snow, in the untracked wilderness with the white-robed mountain peaks the only witnesses to the dramatic scene, alone with their Maker in that vast solitude. It was a time for serious reflection and to Carvalho the words of the Psalmist offered consolation: *They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty their soul fainteth within them and they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distresses.*

A beaver, which was shot by a sentry, was cooked for breakfast and served to the twenty-two men, so we may judge the size of each portion. After crossing the arid waste between the Grand and Green rivers, avoiding the almost impregnable region to the south, where there were numerous canyons and pinnacles, they came upon a party of Utes and were conducted to a village close by where they hoped

to obtain some food, but the Indians had only grass seed to offer them. They could purchase but a small amount of this, but together with the meat of a lame horse, which they also bought, they fared some better. The animals were weak from the scarcity of grass, having little or no opportunity to graze as the snow covered the ground so deep they could not paw it away. Then to add to their misfortunes the pole that sustained the main lodge gave way, forcing the men to sleep without shelter in the open and more frequently under a blanket of snow. The Colonel had his skin lodge, which was carried along after the fashion of the Indians, but a greater part of the baggage was left behind under stress of travel. Twenty-seven of the animals had been killed for food and this loss meant that some of the men were obliged to go on foot. Finally all the extra equipment, including blankets, clothing, and pack-saddles, was wrapped in the buffalo skins forming the great lodge and then buried in the snow, the whole being covered with brush so as to escape notice. When a mule or a horse was unable to go any farther it was shot by the Delawares, its throat cut, the blood being saved in the camp kettle. The animal was then divided into twenty-two parts, two parts of which were given to Colonel Frémont and his cook, ten parts to the men of the white camp and ten to the Indians. Hitherto the Colonel had eaten with his officers, but now he asked that they excuse him, as it called to his mind the terrible scenes of his last expedition. Besides he had an aversion to seeing his officers eat such loathsome food. He adopted a rule that each animal should serve for

six meals for the camp. Of course if one should give out in the meantime this rule did not apply and if the men chose to eat their allotted six meals in one day they would have to go without "until the time arrived for killing another." It happened frequently that the white camp went without food for thirty-six hours, while Frémont and the Delawares ate regularly as they kept to their daily allotment. To ease the pangs of hunger the others of the party would take from their portion of meat, little by little, until no more was left. Carvalho describes his own suffering as being so great that he lost all sense of right and wrong and one night, while going on guard, he stole a piece of frozen horse liver, ate it raw and thought it the most delicious morsel he had ever tasted.

In preparing a horse the entrails were "well shaken" as they had no water to wash them in. They were then boiled in melted snow for a soup, which was highly flavored, the men requesting the cook not to skim it lest some of the nutriment be lost. The hide of the animal was then divided equally among them, while the bones were roasted to a crisp. These the men munched on as they traveled. Where the snow had not covered the ground there was an occasional growth of cactus, which they ate after burning off the prickly exterior. The cactus resembled in taste that of an Irish potato paring. For nearly fifty days the party subsisted on this kind of food as they journeyed between the Grand and Green rivers and over the first range of the Wasatch Mountains. The Colonel went ahead tramping a pathway for the men to follow. Toward



THE GOLDEN GATE

John Charles Frémont named the gatelike entrance to the Bay of San Francisco the Golden Gate in an official communication to Washington, D. C., June, 1848. He wrote in his "Memoirs" as follows: "To this gate I gave the name of Chrysopylae, or Golden Gate, for the same reason that the harbor of Byzantium was named the Golden Horn, Chrysoceras."

the last week of the journey nearly all were without shoes, some had pieces of rawhide tied on their feet, which became stiff and hard from repeated freezing and thawing and were more than uncomfortable.

Gradually they worked their way over the Wasatch Range, now known as the High Plateaus. On one occasion, while they were struggling along the side of a mountain, Frémont was suddenly overcome with weakness. It seemed to him that he could not take another step. Without letting anyone know of his condition he soon reached a good camping place and ordered a halt for the night. The next morning the sensation of weakness had left him, and he took up the march, though his men remained in ignorance of his real reason for going into camp so early the day before. Regardless of the snow or the wind the Colonel made daily astronomical observations. One day he told Carvalho that the little Mormon town of Parowan was just over the mountains and that he expected to reach it in three days. But the snow was very deep in the canyons. It was with the utmost difficulty that they were able to proceed and the Delawares were strongly opposed to making an attempt to cross the range. Frémont said the mountains must be crossed and, accordingly, took the lead up the steep slopes, snow-clad and formidable. At length they gained the summit only to see more mountains ahead that seemed to offer an impassable barrier. Carvalho says that for the first time his heart failed him.

By this time many of the men were without covering for their feet, except, perhaps, some rags

tied on with strings. They were nearly starved and human endurance could not stand the strain much longer. The Delawares, who had been more careful with their rations, were in a much better physical condition. Fuller, who had been walking several weeks, suddenly collapsed. Carvalho and two of the engineers were with him at the time. They tried to assist him but as the snow was very deep and his feet badly frozen, the attempt to aid him failed. He insisted that they leave him and hasten to camp for relief, so they wrapped him in blankets and left him on the trail. There was nothing with which to build a fire for the suffering man—only a dreary waste of snow and rocks without a sign of vegetation. Then, too, his companions were badly crippled and did not make camp until ten o'clock that night when a heavy fall of snow began. Telling the Colonel of Fuller's plight he sent a Mexican with two of the best animals and some roasted horse meat to the rescue. That night the men were greatly agitated, some shedding tears over the condition of their comrade. They sat up late anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Mexican. Daylight came and the man had not returned, so Frémont ordered three Delawares to go for Fuller. They were mounted and he thought if anyone could make the trip they were the men.

About ten o'clock one of them returned with the Mexican and the two mules. He was badly frozen and had suffered terribly. Shortly after his arrival the other two Delawares came in, both supporting Fuller, who was still conscious, though extremely faint and with feet frozen to the ankles. Frémont

did everything possible for him, remaining three days at the camp in which time it was hoped his condition would improve. Finally they took up the march with Fuller mounted on a mule and a Delaware on either side to keep him from falling off. Extra food from the men's scanty store was given him. On the 7th of February Fuller died as he rode along—died almost within sight of relief. His two companions wrapped him in his rubber blanket and laid him across the trail. Frémont says, "He died like a man, on horseback, in his saddle and will be buried like a soldier on the spot where he fell."

Soon after this the party reached the wagon road connecting the Mormon settlement along the western slope of the Wasatch Mountains. Here they met the brother of the Chief of the Utes. One of the band recognized the Colonel from his expedition of 1844 and presented him with a dog. They traded for some flour which, combined with dog meat, provided a regal feast for the starving men. The following day, after a short journey, they arrived at Parowan, camping near the town, where they were once more able to obtain supplies. After a day's rest some of the men, accompanied by several of the townspeople, returned to the spot where Fuller's body was left and buried it.

At Parowan the party was sympathetically received by the Mormons, who opened their homes to the sufferers. They were given beds and comfortable rooms and were provided with excellent food. Frémont appreciated the kindness of these people more than words can tell. Years afterward when Kate Field, then lecturing on the Pacific Coast

on "The Mormon Monster," asked the Colonel to introduce her to a Los Angeles audience he positively refused, saying he could not do so, as the Mormons had once saved him and his party from starvation in 1854. Gratitude for favors received was one of his chief characteristics.

During the last two weeks of his journey Mrs. Frémont was torn with anxiety, but was suddenly relieved of all apprehension as to his safety by a curious experience as related by her daughter. It seems that he had made an entry in his journal, putting there the thought that his wife in Washington might know him to be safe. For several weeks Mrs. Frémont had believed that her husband was in desperate straits. One night following a party when the girls had gathered around an open fire, discussing the events of the evening, Mrs. Frémont stepped into an adjoining room for some wood. As she picked up one of the sticks she felt a hand touch her shoulder and heard the Colonel whisper her name, "Jessie."

"There was no sound save the quick whispered name, no presence, only the touch, but my mother knew as people know in dreams that my father was there, gay and happy, and intending to startle Susie, who, when my mother was married, was only a child of eight and who was always a pet playmate of my father. Her shrill, prolonged scream was his delight and he never lost an opportunity to startle her. Mother came back to the girls' room, but before she could speak Susie gave a great cry, fell in a heap on the rug and screamed again and again, until mother crushed her ball dress over her

head to keep the sound from the neighbors. Her cousin asked mother what she had seen and she explained that she had seen nothing, but had heard my father tell her to keep still until he could scare Susie. Peace came to my mother instantly, and on retiring she fell into a refreshing sleep from which she did not waken until ten the next morning. All fear of the safety of father had vanished from her mind. When my father returned home we learned that it was at the time the party was starving that my mother had the premonition of evil having befallen them, and the entry in the journal showed that exactly at the moment he had written it at Parowan my mother had felt his presence and in that wireless message from heart to heart knew that my father was safe and free from harm. The hour exactly tallied with the entry in his book, allowing for the difference in longitude."

The party remained at Parowan until the 21st of February. The settlers told Frémont that for severity the winter surpassed anything they had ever seen in that region. Carvalho and Egloffstein were in such bad physical shape that they were obliged to travel by wagon to Salt Lake, where the former remained for several months recuperating, after which he followed the Colonel's trail of 1844 to California, meeting his old leader in San Francisco.

In Parowan Frémont met Colonel Babbitt, Secretary of the Territory of Utah, who was leaving for California and who asked the Colonel to accompany him; but the invitation was declined as the survey was not yet completed. Babbitt reported

in San Francisco that the chances were against the party getting through, as they were in such bad shape, but Frémont was not the man to give up the ship once it was launched, and with a smaller party he made preparations to cross the great desert and the white Sierra overlooking the sunset sea.

CHAPTER XIV

First Presidential Candidate of Republican Party

Through Colonel Babbitt, who went East by Panama and through the correspondence of Carvalho published in a Philadelphia newspaper, the public first learned of the safety of the Frémont party, which was thought to have perished in the mountain wilderness. But the Colonel was more concerned in a railroad route than he was in perishing and from Parowan he addressed a letter to Senator Benton in which he congratulated him on the verification of his judgment and the good prospect held out for final success in carrying the road by the central line. "In making my expedition to this point," he writes, "I save nearly a parallel of latitude, shortening the usual distance from Green River here by over a hundred miles." By this expedition Frémont had settled the main question that had bothered them—that of the snows of winter proving too great an obstacle to overcome. In his letter he speaks of going through Cochetope Pass with but four inches of snow on the ground, which "decides what you consider the great question and fulfills the leading condition of my explorations." However, Benton's active interest in the Pacific road, so far as Congress was concerned, had ceased. Despite his thirty years of toil as a lawmaker and a representative of the people of Missouri they refused to return him to Washington, so great was the feeling against anyone who opposed slavery.

For the same reason Frémont had not been reëlected Senator in California, all of which presaged the storm that was to follow.

The Colonel believed explicitly in a transcontinental railroad and intended to devote himself assiduously to its consummation, and we owe him a great debt for his perseverance in this direction. On leaving Parowan he decided to take a more direct route than that of 1844, but one which involved considerable hardship on account of the scarcity of water and which the Mormons regarded as practically impossible. However, he determined to examine it in the interest of geography. He never sent anyone back for the things he had cached in the mountains wrapped in the covering of the big lodge, but set out for another Mormon settlement called Cedar City, about eighteen miles from Parowan and situated near the southeastern side of the Escalante Desert. He followed the California Road for a short time from Cedar City, then proceeded westward across the desert into an unexplored region. There was an occasional flurry of snow and some hail, but they did not last long. In due time they left Utah and entered upon the plateaus of Nevada "bristling with mountains, often in short, isolated blocks and sometimes accumulated into considerable ranges with open and low passes." Not a human being was encountered between Santa Clara Road near the Mormon settlements and the Sierra Nevada, a distance of more than three hundred miles. Nevada was crossed not far from the present town of Pioche. His course then lay to the southwest, passing Thorp on the

Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad. He then went south to the California line, then west to the Sierra, which he climbed to an elevation of nine thousand feet when he was stopped by deep snow, as he felt he would be. Not caring to attempt a passage he returned to the lower country and again went south along the eastern slope of the mountains, where the party had an encounter with the Indians, whom they defeated, capturing a number of horses.

Two or three days' travel farther south and the Colonel began to look for a pass through the mountains into the San Joaquin Valley. He found several routes which looked promising, but did not hesitate long in choosing a way as the men were again living on horse meat. He finally discovered an opening some thirteen miles in length and lying quite near to Walker's Pass. Through this he crossed to a small branch of the Kern River. He was sure that this pass and the valley to which it led offered a way for wagon travel where no obstruction existed for forty miles. He reached San Francisco about the 1st of May, where he was tendered a public dinner, which he was forced to decline as he was desirous of getting East as quickly as possible. He arrived in Washington the same month, May, 1855.

The following spring he went with his family to New York, where for several months he was engaged with the photographer, Brady, in making into photographs the daguerre plates taken by Carvalho. Some of the views were done in color by the painter Hamilton of Philadelphia. The story of the various expeditions was to have been published by George Childs, but Frémont was too busily en-

gaged to write and the plan fell through, but the material collected was saved for future use. Even now there was more or less talk of Frémont for President. In April, 1856, he was asked to participate in a meeting in New York called for the purpose of discussing the repeal of the "Missouri Compromise" as it affected the anti-slavery agitation. While he was prevented from attending the meeting by previous engagements, he wrote a strong letter in which he said, "I am opposed to slavery in the abstract and upon principle, sustained and made habitual by long settled convictions." He regarded the repeal of the Missouri Compromise as a blow to national honor. For this reason he would not accept the presidential nomination from the Democratic Party, which was offered him by a number of men prominent in that organization.

In June, 1856, there were assembled in convention at Musical Fund Hall, Philadelphia, some thousand delegates for the purpose of nominating a presidential ticket. It proved a momentous event in American history, for on that occasion was witnessed the birth of the Republican Party. Previous to this Millard Fillmore and Andrew Donelson had been nominated for the Presidency and Vice Presidency by the "Know-Nothings." Later on James Buchanan and John C. Breckenridge were nominated by the Democrats, but the new party chose for its standard bearers John C. Frémont and Honorable William L. Dayton, formerly a United States Senator, who had a competitor in the person of Abraham Lincoln. The nomination of Frémont, after a few ballots, was declared unanimous, so

he became the first candidate of the Republican Party.

The platform as announced was opposed to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, to the Democratic policy, to the further extension of slavery into the free states, and urged the admission of Kansas as a free state. All in all the platform, enunciating the party's principles, was a very outspoken document. Colonel Frémont was duly notified of his nomination and in reply to the committee said, among other things, that "international embarrassments are mainly the result of secret diplomacy, which aims to keep from the knowledge of the people the operations of the government." It will be remembered that President Wilson bore strongly upon the evils of "secret diplomacy" during the World War. Many years before, John C. Frémont had pronounced against it, as with his prophetic vision he saw its danger to the peace of the world.

Soon after the convention in Philadelphia another body of citizens gathered in New York and formed the "National American Party," which tendered its support to Colonel Frémont. Abraham Lincoln, who was at the head of the Frémont electoral ticket for Illinois, made numerous campaign speeches in that state. Although opposed to slavery, Senator Benton labored under the delusion that all reforms could be accomplished within the Democratic fold, and in consequence offered no aid to his son-in-law. In fact, Benton wrote to the *New York Times* that he was entirely opposed to the movement in which the Colonel was engaged and

could "do nothing to promote it in any way." In a speech delivered about this time he said:

"I will assist the new President (for I look upon Mr. Buchanan's election as certain) in doing what I am sure he will do, that is to say all in his power to preserve the peace of the country at home and abroad and to restore the fraternal feelings between the different sections of the Union now so lamentably impaired. . . . It is unnecessary for me to speak of other parties. I adhere to my own and support it and that to the exclusion of all the rest. One only I allude to—one with which the name of a member of my family is connected and in reference to which some persons who judge me by themselves attribute to me a sinister connection. . . . I am above family and above self when the good of the Union is concerned."

Frémont could expect no help from his father-in-law, who remained as adamant in his loyalty to the Democratic Party. The most enthusiastic meeting was held in Newark, New Jersey, in June, 1856, ratifying the nomination of Frémont. It was said to exceed that accorded "Tippacanoë and Tyler, too" in point of fervor and emotion. The greatest excitement prevailed throughout the country. It was openly stated by one of the candidates on an opposition ticket that should the Colonel be successful the Southern states would withdraw from the Union in a body. Millard Fillmore said to a crowd in Albany, New York:

"We see a political party presenting candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency selected for the first time from the free states alone, with the

avowed purpose of electing their candidates by the suffrage of one part of the Union only, to rule over the whole United States. Can it be possible that those who are engaged in such a measure can have seriously reflected upon the consequences which must inevitably follow in case of success? Can they have the madness or folly to believe that our Southern brethren would submit to be governed by such a magistrate? . . . If the Sectional Party succeeds it leads inevitably to the destruction of this beautiful fabric reared by our forefathers, cemented by their blood and bequeathed to us as a precious inheritance."

Toombs expressed the opinion that the "election of Frémont would be an end to the Union and ought to be. The object of Frémont's friends is the conquest of the South. I am content that they should own us when they have conquered us, but not before." As an instance of the intense feeling which existed at the time a man in Virginia who attended the Republican convention was driven from the state, and Botts, who said the South would not secede in case of Frémont's election, was ordered by the Richmond *Enquirer* to leave the state at once and not "provoke the disgrace of a lynching." A dismal picture of conditions in the North, should the Republicans prove successful, was painted by various orators. The financial and industrial ruin of the North was inevitable. There would be no exchange of goods. The trade of the South would enter new channels. Three million working men in the North would be deprived of an opportunity to earn a living. The steamboats and railroads would

carry no more Southern passengers; the business houses of the North which had Southern customers would close their doors; hundreds of ships would be idle; commerce would vanish and credit be gone.

Should Frémont's election be followed by secession it will not be any act of the Republicans, was the reply to the threats of the Democrats who planned to destroy the Union, thus breaking one of the cardinal principles of democracy that the majority shall rule. The Republicans had a strong appeal to the naturalized citizen, so far as the question of slavery was concerned. It was asked of him if he could compete with slave labor or be a free man on slave soil. Frémont was opposed to the extension of slavery. He was for making Kansas a free state and keeping it open to honest working men. He advocated the building of a Pacific Railway, which would give work for a term of years to thousands of laborers.

Rocky Mountain clubs, Pioneer clubs, Frémont and Freedom clubs were formed and in various large cities there were torchlight processions each night in which campaign songs were sung and enthusiasm was unbounded. Great mass meetings were held and it was estimated that a hundred thousand people were present at one in Pittsburgh, while twenty thousand listened to a speech from the balcony of the Merchants Exchange on Wall Street. The Northern nonslave states carried on a most vigorous campaign, while the Southern politicians grew more and more vehement in their denunciation of the Frémont ticket. In their opinion he was a traitor to his country. On the contrary the abo-

litionists of the North looked upon him as the emancipator—a man destined to free the slaves of the South. The fiercest struggle was in Pennsylvania, as this state was regarded as the battleground of the contending forces. Its twenty-seven electoral votes would determine the victor, consequently the contest raged here with unabated vigor. The western half of the state was for Frémont overwhelmingly, while the eastern portion was for Buchanan. There was nothing that the Colonel's opponents did not resort to in order to prejudice the voter. All sorts of slanderous tales were circulated. The bigger the lie that was told about him the greater the satisfaction it gave to his enemies. For vituperation and calumny the presidential campaign of 1856 is unsurpassed in the history of the United States. Frémont was called "a shallow, vainglorious, woolly horse, mule-eating, free love, nigger-embracing, black Republican—a financial spendthrift and a political mountebank." It was more than a mud-slinging campaign. In some respects it was positively vicious and the bitterness exhibited foreshadowed the long and terrible Civil War which settled forever the issues involved in that campaign.

Of course some of the charges made against Frémont were absolutely silly. Because he inscribed a cross on Independence Rock he was said to be a Catholic, there being at the time a great prejudice against that religious denomination. One party wrote to the papers scouting the idea that he was the discoverer of South Pass when he made no claim to this honor. He was attacked for wearing a beard and mustache; he was called a French actor recently

from Paris; a foreigner born in Montreal, who was trying to take the reins of government and drive the nation to destruction. Anything and everything that his opponents could conceive was brought against him.

"The campaign was full of personalities," writes his daughter, "and my father's nature was such that he could not have withstood its bitterness. He was used to life in the open and wanted a square fight, not one filled with petty innuendoes and recriminations. So at the outset it was agreed that he should not read the newspapers until they had been blue-penciled by my mother—a promise he religiously kept during all of the excitement of the year."

Among the campaign songs of the period, perhaps the following was the most popular:

All hail to Frémont! Swell the lofty acclaim
Like winds from the mountain, like prairies aflame!
Once more the Pathfinder is forth on his hunt,
Clear the way for free soil, for free men and Frémont!

We'll spurn every fetter, we'll break every rod,
And Kansas shall bloom like the Garden of God,
When we plant the white banner of Freedom upon't
And cry, "To the rescue, free men and Frémont!"

Oh, the land that we love shall be sacred from slaves,
From the tyrant's misrule and the plunder of knaves,
We'll baptise the Union in Liberty's font,
And the faith of our fathers shall live with Frémont!

The pulpits of the North were kept busy refuting the calumnies against the Colonel and urging the abolition of slavery. The men of letters in the free states lent their undivided support to the Re-

publican ticket. It is said that Longfellow postponed a trip to Europe to cast his vote for Frémont. Willis, who had never voted in his life, declared his first vote should go to the Republican leader. Irving made a similar promise. Bryant, Emerson, and George William Curtis took the platform; Whittier, Lowell, and others kept their pens busy proclaiming freedom for the slaves. Theirs was a righteous cause and they entered into the fight with the zeal such an issue inspires. The extreme laudation Frémont received only increased the hatred of the pro-slavery advocates.

At this time he is described by one of his ardent admirers as follows:

“In the midst of the group sat a small, intense, earnest, determined-looking man, who bore the traces of hardship and toil, yet his countenance beamed with such an expression of good nature that it seemed to preserve a magnetic attraction for his guests. . . . His hair, parted down the middle, swept with graceful luxuriance over his broad, high temples; his feet were encased in a pair of light slippers; he wore neither suspenders nor vest, and his coat was of calico thrown carelessly across his shoulders. . . . Intelligence was breathed with every utterance; resolution was portrayed upon every feature; modesty, ability, integrity were written as plainly as the alphabet upon the whole man. . . . I have yet to see an engraving of Frémont that does him justice. The features may be faithfully delineated, but his eye—I never saw one with such an earnest expression, such vivid intensity.”

He is described by John Bigelow as being "about five feet nine inches in height, slight and sinewy in his structure, but gracefully proportioned and eminently prepossessing in his personal appearance. His eyes are blue and very large, his nose aquiline, his forehead, over which his brown curling hair is parted at the center, is high and capacious. He never shaves, but wears his beard neatly trimmed."

C. S. Henry in writing to General Swift said: "The prints fall exceedingly short in doing justice to his appearance—utterly fail to give one the idea of that rare union of gentleness, refinement, and delicacy, with resolute energy and firmness, which are so remarkable in his features and in the expression of his countenance. His whole air and manner, tone and voice and way of speaking are those of a quiet, modest, gentle, and sincere, yet firm and earnest man, in whom the intellectual and moral faculties are in fine harmony."

When in the state election Pennsylvania went Democratic the hope of the Republican Party waned considerably, but the fight was kept up with renewed vigor even though the effort was futile. The Frémont–Dayton ticket was defeated, Buchanan receiving one hundred and seventy-four electoral votes to one hundred and fourteen by Frémont, which was a very good showing for so young a political organization. The Colonel's friends were very much disappointed, but he took his defeat very philosophically. Preston Blair, who had a strong hand in guiding the Republican campaign, broke down completely when it was definitely known that Frémont had been defeated. The Colonel's daugh-

ter Elizabeth shed many tears, but her mother consoled her with a heart-to-heart talk on courage which served as a valuable lesson throughout her entire life.

It is quite probable that had Frémont been elected the Civil War would have broken out almost immediately, as it was shown later that he would not temporize. When he believed a thing was wrong he did not hesitate to say so and acted at once with vigor and determination to set it right. This is about what he would have done had he won the Presidency.

In the spring following the memorable campaign Frémont and his family journeyed to Paris. The strain of the previous months had undermined Mrs. Frémont's health, and it was thought a brief stay abroad would prove beneficial. Aside from this they wished to say good-by to Mrs. Frémont's sister, commonly called "Aunt Susie" by the younger generation, who was to take up her residence in India, her husband having been appointed French Consul to that country. They had been in Paris but a short time when they were obliged to return to the United States owing to the serious illness of Senator Benton. After a few weeks in Washington the Senator seemed so much improved in health that the family proceeded to California by the Isthmus route, going to Bear Valley on the Colonel's Mariposa estate. They had no more than arrived there when news reached them of Senator Benton's death. It seems that he had requested his physician not to tell his daughter of the serious nature of his malady to save her unnecessary worry. His passing was a

great blow to Mrs. Frémont, and it was some time before she recovered from the shock. The family expected to remain in Bear Valley about three months, which would afford them a pleasant vacation, then to return to Paris. Frémont was now the bona fide owner of the Mariposa, but his troubles connected with this tract of land were by no means at an end. The American law had not yet decided whether or not gold and other precious minerals went with the patent of ownership. Here was a rather complex question. As a measure had been passed in California making it lawful to "jump a claim" under conditions specified in the Act, the miners took advantage of it and Frémont's life was made a burden.

Bear Valley was named after the grizzlies that gathered there in great numbers. The white-washed cottage occupied by the family was surrounded by oaks, and its rooms were neatly papered, while two brick chimneys added to the artistic appearance of the place. Frémont felt it was a real home even though it was far from the sea of which he had dreamed. They were fortunate in obtaining vegetables from an Italian gardener in exchange for the waste water from one of the quartz mills. Indian women were employed as servants and proved very honest and industrious despite the fact that the Colonel had been warned against them. Mrs. Frémont was not very contented in Bear Valley. It was far removed from civilization and the things for which she cared, but she seldom complained. She was not interested in either mines or horses, while Frémont and his daughter enjoyed their rides to-

gether over the hills and valleys of the forty-three-thousand-acre estate.

If a mine was found to be abandoned anyone had the right to take possession of it, which resulted in the Colonel having no end of trouble over the Black Drift mine. The man guarding it was bribed to leave his post and squatters immediately took it. An attempt to take the Pine Tree mine was not so successful. The guards were not so easily bribed. Five men were far back in the mine at work under the direction of a man named Ketton. The squatters, thinking at first that the mine was without protection, attempted to jump the claim, but discovering the five men demanded that they should give it up. On refusal the squatters determined to starve the men out and located themselves at the mouth of the mine. In a few hours over a hundred men had gathered there, denying anyone the right to enter. Frémont had only twenty men to pit against them. The situation was serious. The men in the mine had sufficient fresh air coming in from an adjoining shaft and plenty of water, but were without a morsel of food. Nor would the crowd permit any food to be carried to them. On the broad space of ground near the entrance to the mine the invaders camped and took turns at standing guard. Frémont had two problems to face: How to get word to the Governor and how to get food to the men. Finally Mrs. Ketton, wife of the foreman, decided to "dare the lion," so taking a market basket full of provisions she presented herself at the entrance of the mine, where she was refused admittance. This fired her temper and she told the men that she intended

to take food to her husband. And she did so in spite of all threats. Thus twice daily during the five days of the siege Mrs. Ketton could be seen, basket in hand, making for the Pine Tree mine.

The Colonel was worried for fear she would be shot, but perhaps her safety lay in the fact that she was a woman. Every pass leading to the Sacramento Valley was picketed to prevent information being sent the Governor. A young Englishman lived with the Frémonts who, because of overstudy, was spending some time in the mountains recuperating. He volunteered to take the news to the Governor, but the Colonel would not allow him to go. However, Frémont's daughter, unbeknown to her father, loaned the young man her pet horse, "Ayah," and started him off by the light of the stars over Mount Bullion to Coulterville, where he got a messenger to go on to the capital and inform Governor Downey of the situation on the Mariposa. The Governor dispatched his own messenger to the scene of the trouble, who informed the squatters that they had no right to the mine and commanded them to disband at once or he would call out the militia. The siege was thus brought to a sudden termination.

Mrs. Frémont was worn with anxiety over the Colonel, who had made various speeches to the invading party, attempting to dissuade them from their plan to capture the mine. A New York business man, who happened to be present during the controversy, afterward told Mrs. Frémont that during one of her husband's speeches he counted eleven rifles aimed at the speaker.

At one time notice was served on the family that

unless they vacated within twenty-four hours the house would be burned and the Colonel killed. On the occasion of the notice being served Frémont was at the mine, and ordering the hired man to drive her to Bear Valley Inn, Mrs. Frémont told the landlord to inform the writers of the message that the land belonged to them and that they intended to keep it. In this instance she showed that she was the true daughter of Senator Benton. The threat conveyed in the notice was not carried out, but tin cans filled with powder were exploded from time to time during the nights that followed. A committee of women afterward called on Mrs. Frémont to thank her for remaining during the trouble.

When matters quieted down the Frémonts paid a visit to San Francisco, and on their return to Bear Valley they planned a trip to Yosemite. However, just as they were leaving the cottage the Colonel was called upon to defend his title to the Mariposa, and the daughter, together with some friends, made the journey to the famous valley. Their stay was cut short by a battle between two tribes of Indians of which they were warned by a friendly member of one of the warring factions preceding hostilities. As the season advanced and the heat grew more intense in Bear Valley the Frémonts moved to San Francisco, the Colonel making frequent trips to his mine to attend to business. In the city by the Golden Gate the family went house hunting. Fortunately they found a little cottage just across the channel from Alcatraz Island which won Mrs. Frémont's heart. It was so close to the fort that they were obliged to open the windows when the big

guns were fired to prevent the concussion from shattering the panes.

The Colonel's trouble with his Mariposa tract increased. His Presidential campaign had cost him a great deal of money and this, together with the expense of developing his mines, left him in straitened circumstances. From the beginning he had proved a poor financier, as men are apt to be who devote the major part of their lives to studying the plants and flowers with which the Creator has beautified the world. That he was unsuccessful as a money maker is nothing to his discredit. Many an honest man has demonstrated his ability to get into debt, and Frémont at this time found himself financially embarrassed. A judgment was issued against him for a considerable amount. The Mariposa tract was sold by the sheriff in 1859 to the plaintiff, Francisco O'Campo, who a few months afterward made an assignment of the property to Mark Brumagim of San Francisco, the Colonel's chief creditor, who offered to give him a certain portion of the estate on conditions which he was unable to meet.

At Black Point, two miles from the Golden Gate, was situated the little cottage that had so pleased Mrs. Frémont. Here they bought twelve acres of land, paying forty-two thousand dollars for the property, which was purchased from a San Francisco banker. They set about to improve the place, making walks and drives and building stables for the horses, as well as beautifying it with gardens of roses and other flowers. Now that her father was gone Mrs. Frémont had no desire to return to the

East, and here the family found rest and pleasure for some time. Among their frequent visitors was the noted divine, Starr King, who took a prominent part in saving California to the Union. He named their home "The Lodge by the Golden Gate" and was one of their best beloved friends.

Another frequent visitor to the Frémonts was "a brilliantly clever and intensely shy" young man named Francis Bret Harte, who was a regular contributor to a literary periodical of San Francisco, *The Golden Era*, afterward owned by Harr Wagner and edited by his wife, Madge Morris. Young Harte brought his manuscripts to Mrs. Frémont for friendly criticism. She took a great interest in the writer, obtaining a position for him in the Surveyor-General's office, where he would be able to devote more time to his literary work. Later on, when a change of officials occurred, she succeeded in placing him elsewhere. At the time Harte was about twenty-two years of age and Mrs. Frémont saw a touch of genius in his work, which has since been recognized by the whole civilized world. Afterward he became editor of *The Overland Monthly*, in which magazine he published his first pronounced hit, "The Luck of Roaring Camp." This won for him an invitation to write for the *Atlantic Monthly*, which eventually took him East and thence across the ocean to London. While Harte was a writer of beautiful prose and an excellent story teller, as a poet his work falls below that of his contemporary, Joaquin Miller. However, he was the pioneer of Western literature—the first to make the sunset land known to the world of romance.

During the stay of the Frémonts at Black Point the first pony express arrived with letters for them from their Eastern friends. It was quite an event, the family by chance having gone into San Francisco on that day, where they witnessed the excitement attending the arrival of the mail. Soon after this the Colonel went East and on to London. In April, 1861, the sound of the gun that was fired on Fort Sumpter reverberated throughout the land and changed the course of people's lives. The issue between the North and South that was smoldering during the Frémont campaign had finally burst into flame. It has been said that no question is ever settled until it is settled right, and to settle the differences between the two sections of the Union seemed to require a war, which for some time had been regarded as inevitable. With the outbreak of hostilities Mrs. Frémont began making preparations to return East, but was so severely injured in a runaway down Russian Hill that it was several weeks before she could leave. She then rented the house at Black Point and with her little daughter took a ship bound for New York, loaded with soldiers. The voyage up the Atlantic Coast was fraught with excitement, the vessel being chased for a time by a rebel privateer, the *Jeff Davis*, which fired two shots that fortunately fell short of their mark.

On arriving at New York Mrs. Frémont was met by the Colonel. While abroad he had acted as agent for the government, had purchased arms and now returned to be made a Major General by President Lincoln with headquarters in St. Louis. The Frémonts took up their residence in the Brant house,

where their stay was made very unpleasant, many of their old friends being Southern sympathizers. He was given command of the Western Department.

The first Bull Run had ended in defeat for the Union forces, which was quite discouraging to the people of the North. St. Louis was in a sense a Southern city, at least in sentiment. It was very difficult for the war sewing circle to find a meeting place until a patriotic German woman gave the circle the use of her home. The women who stood with the North were wont to carry their sewing into public places to let it be known what their sympathies were. It was a time of the most intense feeling, when hatreds were kindled that never fully died out. Even families were divided on the question of slavery, and because of the Southern sentiment which prevailed in St. Louis it was thought best by Frémont to place the city under martial law. For this he was severely criticized by some of his former friends, Blair declaring that such an act was the "offspring of timidity"—as if there were anything timid about the General, who had faced more dangers in a month than come to the average man in a lifetime. In his martial edict it is quite probable that he knew what he was about. When he arrived at St. Louis he found things in a confused condition. Men had not yet been organized into a fighting unit. There were only raw recruits to deal with; ferry boats were reconstructed so as to serve for gunboats, and preparations made for a real war that might last for several years. Frémont was not one of those who underestimated the strength of the enemy. He

knew the determination of the Confederacy and felt that time should be taken to prepare adequately.

In his book entitled "General Frémont and the Injustice Done Him by Politicians and Envious Military Men," William Brotherhood says: "When General Frémont took command of the Department of the West it was well known that everything was in a chaotic state. Floyd and other thieves had managed to steal all our arms, etc. He bought arms, built barracks, organized his army, fortified St. Louis, issued contracts to build ironclad gunboats, and designed a new style of mortar boats." It is evident that his preparations were far more elaborate than most people ever dreamed or considered necessary, but he knew what the war meant and intended to make his department as efficient as possible. In organization he was a master. In this respect he is said to have resembled McClellan.

It was the General's wish that the war should be restricted to the soldiers on both sides, thus doing away with unauthorized guerrilla bands so common in Missouri at the time. To attain this he took the matter up with General Price of the Confederate forces, with whom he came to a definite agreement as to a policy both sides should pursue. There was to be no arrest of citizens for any expression of opinion. Families broken up by the military were to be reunited and the war carried to the armies in the field.

On August 31st, 1861, the General issued a proclamation which he addressed to all those who had taken up arms against the Union and which con-

tained a clause that embarrassed the government and ultimately resulted in his retirement from the army. The offending clause is as follows:

“The property, real and personal, of all persons in the state of Missouri who shall take up arms against the United States, or who shall be directly proven to have taken an active part with their enemies in the field, is declared to be confiscated to the public use, and their slaves, if any they have, are hereby declared free men.”

This was a very sane and sensible utterance and is said to have been the first emancipation proclamation ever put forth in the United States. It was perfectly characteristic of Frémont. Today those persons found guilty of giving aid and comfort to an enemy of our government in time of war are summarily dealt with by the authorities. To take such action would require no proclamation whatsoever. In issuing this mandate the General intended to put an end to disloyalty in Missouri, but it acted like a bombshell. Lincoln was not ready for any such drastic procedure. He had other plans of a more diplomatic nature. He regarded the proclamation as ill-timed and suggested its modification, which Frémont left for him to do. Much discussion was provoked by this act, which was received with acclaim by the abolitionists. Lincoln's repeal of the proclamation was considered by them a pro-slavery move and brought down the viles of wrath upon the head of the martyred President.

“If I turn to General Frémont,” said Wendell Phillips, “I see a man whose first act was to use the freedom of the negro as his weapon; I see one whose

thorough loyalty to democratic institutions, without regard to race, whose earnest and decisive character, whose clear-sighted statesmanship and rare military ability, justify my confidence that in his hands all will be done to save the state that foresight, decision, and statesmanship can do."

William Lloyd Garrison said that "Lincoln had not a drop of anti-slavery blood in his veins." Naturally Professor Royce finds the proclamation to have been "bombastic" and characterized by "effrontery and hypocrisy," a remark in perfect keeping with his ironclad prejudice. This only goes to show the injustice done a brave and patriotic man whose whole career proves him to be anything but a hypocrite. The sentiment of the abolitionists was well expressed in the following poem addressed "To John C. Frémont" by John G. Whittier:

Thy error Frémont, simply was to act
 A brave man's part, without the statesman's tact,
 And, taking counsel but of common sense,
 To strike at cause as well as consequence.
 O, never yet since Roland wound his horn
 At Roncesvalles, has a blast been blown
 Far-heard, wide-echoed, startling as thine own,
 Heard from the van of freedom's hope forlorn!
 It had been safer, doubtless, for the time,
 To flatter treason, and avoid offense
 To that Dark Power whose underlying crime
 Heaves upward its perpetual turbulence.
 But if thine be the fate of all who break
 The ground for Truth's seed, or forerun their years
 Till lost in distance, or with stout hearts make
 A lane for freedom through the level spears,
 Still take thou courage! God has spoken through thee,

Irrevocable, the mighty words, Be Free!
The land shakes with them and the slave's dull ear
Turns from the rice-swamp stealthily, to hear.
Who would recall them now must first arrest
The winds that blow down from the free Northwest
Ruffling the Gulf; or like a scroll roll back
The Mississippi to its upper springs.
Such words fulfill their prophecy and lack
But the full time to harden into things.

CHAPTER XV

Territorial Governor of Arizona and Last Days

Later on during the war proclamations similar to that of Frémont were issued by other generals, and no complaint was made. During the hundred days he served as Commander of the Department of the West General U. S. Grant was one of his subordinates, and in his "Personal Memoirs" Grant tells of the battle of Belmont, which was fought under Frémont's orders and which was said by some Northern critics to be wholly "unnecessary, barren of results or the possibility of them from the beginning." General Grantsays: "If it had not been fought Colonel Oglesby would probably have been captured or destroyed with his three thousand men. Then I should have been culpable, indeed!"

In their volume, "The Civil War From a Southern Standpoint," W. R. Garret and R. A. Hawley say that "Frémont was made the scapegoat." Everything connected with his command of the Western Department points in this direction. His superior officers and the swivel-chair officials in Washington, knowing him not to be a West Point graduate, did everything in their power to influence the President to remove him. If given half a chance he would have demonstrated his ability in the position to which he had been assigned, but in the course of three months, with an army of raw recruits to train and a thousand and one other things to engage his attention he did as well as any other man could have done under the circumstances. The same criticism

was leveled at Grant, who said: "Because I would not divulge my ultimate plans to visitors they pronounced me idle, incompetent, and unfit to command men in an emergency and clamored for my removal." It is a wonder that Grant was not removed for "incompetency," which seemed to be quite the fashion during the Civil War.

It was evidently Frémont's intention to move down and capture New Orleans, and it was for this purpose that he spent so much money in preparing his army and in getting boats into proper condition. However, he had no more than begun his preparations when he was removed and given a command in Virginia, supporting Banks in his engagement with Stonewall Jackson.

While commanding the Department of the West Frémont had on his staff a number of foreign officers, prominent among whom was Major Charles Zagonyi, a Hungarian, who commanded the General's bodyguard. He was a brave officer and once made a charge on Springfield, Missouri, in which he was badly worsted. For this Frémont was roundly abused, despite the fact that the Major had implored the General to permit him to make the charge, but the enemy was strongly reënforced after Zagonyi was in action, which accounted for his defeat.

There was some criticism of the General regarding the personnel of his staff, which was composed to a considerable extent of Hungarians. Some of his enemies made much of this, even intimating to the President that Frémont was using his position to work up a Northwest Confederacy. Doctor Emil

Preetorious of the *Westliche Post* of St. Louis is reported as saying to Ida M. Tarbell in regard to this charge that he "knew Frémont gave no countenance to any scheme which others may have conceived for the establishment of a Northwest Confederacy. I had abundant proof through the years that I knew him that he was a patriot and a most unselfish man. The defect in Frémont was that he was a dreamer. Impractical, visionary things went a long way with him. He was a poor judge of men and formed strange associations. . . . Mrs. Frémont, unlike the General, was most practical. She was fond of success. She and the General were alike, however, in their notion of the loyalty due between friends." Rather than a fault we should consider loyalty an admirable trait of character in anyone. As for Frémont being a dreamer, we must remember that "the dreamer lives forever, but the toiler dies in a day." Frémont has a pretty good grasp on Immortality.

Another charge against the General was his tendency to keep aloof, not wishing to be disturbed by Tom, Dick, and Harry—men who called upon him for the purpose of imparting their ideas on how to conduct a successful war. Because of his aversion to discussing these matters with his various visitors he made many enemies, who told all sorts of things about him, some of the tales being whispered into the Presidential ear.

The average, everyday American of that period felt that it was his privilege to rush into the General's office unannounced and take up his time to the exclusion of important matters. Frémont in-

troduced the innovation of having a guard at the door whose duty it was to inquire into the caller's business. This is now the custom among business men, as it saves a waste of valuable time. Those whom Frémont declined to see became personal enemies, forgetting he may have been struggling with a multiplicity of details connected with his department.

On his coöperation with Banks in the Virginia campaign he was unfortunate on account of the swivel-chair intelligence emanating from Washington. In his life of Stonewall Jackson, Colonel Henderson says: "Mr. Stanton, however, preferred to control the chessboard by the light of unaided wisdom, and while McDowell was unnecessarily strengthened, both Banks and Frémont were dangerously weakened." While the General was in Virginia he had to contend with poor equipment, many of the soldiers going barefooted. The condition of his troops may be compared at this time to that of his men during one of his Western expeditions. In repairing bridges they were forced to borrow tools to do the work; the regiments were reduced to four hundred men; there were few knapsacks, a lack of clothing, and the horses were so poor they could hardly pull the big guns. Then, too, a general was ordered from Washington when to advance and when to halt, despite the fact that he was in the field and was much better informed as to what move he should make. Frémont was compelled to put up with this sort of thing and suffered in consequence. Carl Schurz was in the division under Frémont's command and writes of him as follows:

"I saw before me a man of middle stature, elegant build, muscular and elastic, dark hair and beard slightly streaked with gray, a broad forehead, fine, regular features. It has been said that there was much of the charlatan in him, but his appearance at that time certainly betrayed nothing of the kind. There was an air of refinement in his bearing. His manners seemed perfectly natural, easy, and unaffected, without any attempt at posing. His conversation, carried on in a low, gentle voice, had a suggestion of reticence and reserve in it, but not enough to cause a suspicion of insincerity."

On June 26th, 1862, Frémont was given a command under Major-General Pope in the Army of Virginia, but declined on the ground that Pope was his junior and that to accept would be to "reduce his rank and consideration in the service of his country." His military career was at an end and his place was taken by General Franz Sigel.

With his family he went to New York, following his unfortunate experiences in Virginia. Here they made their home on the Hudson near Tarrytown, where the two sons attended a preparatory school for West Point and Annapolis. Mrs. Frémont's time was occupied with music and charity work. When supplies were needed in the South she appealed to General Banks, then a member of Congress, for a warship with which to deliver them. The request was granted, the act proving a factor in cementing the bond of friendship between the North and the South. Including farm implements and food over ten million dollars' worth of goods was sent by the North to the stricken Southerners.

In the meantime Frémont had neglected his Mariposa holdings. In 1863 he gave a mortgage to Ketchum & Pryor upon six-eighths of the estate to secure the sum of \$1,500,000. Mortgages were also made to the same parties on the remaining two-eighths by Abia Selover and Frederick Billings, with an understanding that these mortgages were made to purchase certain encumbrances on the property, and the Mariposa Company, under the laws of New York, became the owner of the entire tract. Mark Brumagim was in reality the owner until such a time as Frémont or his assigns should redeem it by paying some three hundred thousand dollars in gold, but during the war the price of gold had doubled, making it impossible to meet the payment of such a large sum. Brumagim afterward sold his title to Corneleus K. Garrison and after that the land was lost in a maze of legal technicalities in which the General was not concerned.

There had been discovered a movement on the part of France to recognize the Confederacy, with San Francisco as an objective point for her operations. Consequently fortifications were rushed in the city by the Golden Gate in anticipation of French activity in that quarter. This resulted in confiscation for military purposes of the land including Black Point. Nothing was said to Frémont about paying him for the property in which he had invested so much money. It was simply taken from him without even a word of thanks. For years he endeavored to get the government to reimburse him, but without avail. Doubtless Congress figured that it was only Frémont anyway and that he had suf-

ferred so many reverses that he was well able to withstand another. Up to the day of his death the matter was never settled and as has been said, "Congress today stands convicted of having forcibly taken from a citizen real estate without compensation." This is the fine treatment he received for his services to the United States! For such high-handed robbery the nation may well hide its face in shame!

Frémont resigned from the army in June, 1864. There was a movement to nominate him for President to oppose Lincoln, but nothing came of it. Later he was made president of the contemplated Memphis, El Paso & Pacific Railway.

Again the family visited Paris, and while there Mrs. Frémont and her daughter received an invitation to come to Copenhagen to attend the marriage feast of the young King and Queen of Denmark. They were abroad about six weeks. Mrs. Frémont accompanied her husband back to the United States, while their daughter remained in Dresden to superintend the education of her youngest brother. The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war drove her home and she left Dresden on the last passenger train out of the city.

The Frémont residence on the Hudson was "swept away in a railroad panic." Once more they returned to the West, the General having been appointed Territorial Governor of Arizona. They took the Union Pacific, this being Frémont's first trip overland by train. During the journey a New York banker seated near him complained incessantly about the hardships and the time required in

making the journey. These remarks amused the General very much when he contrasted his present comfortable situation with that of the time when he endured suffering and starvation in the snow-clad ranges. Had the gentlemanly banker experienced one-hundredth part of what Frémont had he would never have made a complaint.

In September, 1878, the family left San Francisco for Prescott, Arizona. This journey, according to Elizabeth Frémont, was begun with many misgivings. It was like going into an undiscovered country, but the General was a poor man and the salary of two thousand a year appealed to him. He had been robbed of his Black Point home, had lost his place on the Hudson, his railway venture had failed and he found himself at the end of his resources and was very glad to accept the offer of the governorship. It is interesting to note that his old friend and comrade, Alexis Godey, accompanied him as far as Los Angeles. When the train was approaching the southern city it was met by a special bearing General Sherman, who had been on a tour of inspection through New Mexico and Arizona. He expressed himself very forcibly regarding the terrible road to Prescott. Such a lengthy conversation ensued between the two Generals that the conductor of the Sherman train, growing impatient, called the attention of his famous passenger to the fact that they should be under way. The General turning to him said: "Don't be in a hurry! This is only a single track, and anyway had it not been for the men of the army you never would have had a California in which to build your road."

In Los Angeles the Frémonts were serenaded by the citizens. They spent several days with Mrs. Severance, the General living over in retrospect the time when he was military Governor, stationed in that city. At Yuma they bade good-by to the train and entered an army ambulance on their way to Prescott. They soon found that General Sherman had not exaggerated in his account of the Arizona roads. For miles they traveled over a cactus-crowned desert with nothing to break the monotony of the sandy levels. When the hour for making camp arrived, blankets were spread on the sand for most of the party, Mrs. Frémont sleeping on the cushions of the ambulance. During the trip they came upon a miner making his way across the desert. Frémont invited him to ride, taking compassion on a man afoot in such a desolate region. It took several days to reach Prescott—days spent in trying to extract some pleasure out of the journey and nights out under the clear, white stars. At last they came to Kelsey Station, situated in a beautiful grass-covered valley, where they were met by Governor Hoyt. From a Justice of the Peace living there Frémont took the oath of office.

The ambulance rumbled on again, and they soon came to Skull Valley, which derived its name from the fact that "it was the last place where the Indians and whites met in deadly combat, the Indians piling the skulls of the vanquished in mounds along the way." Finally the ambulance entered a forest of pines and began to climb a mountain to an elevation of six thousand feet. Just outside of Prescott they were again met by Governor Hoyt, who had

preceded them, and were escorted into town, where temporary quarters were provided them at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Fitch. Their first night in Prescott they were served with a six-course dinner and enjoyed the comfort of real beds in a well-furnished, modern house. After much delay they found a suitable place to live, where they spent the following three years. They paid a rent of ninety dollars a month, and their Chinese cook received a salary of forty, so there was not much left for luxuries.

The first Thanksgiving proclamation Arizona ever had was issued by Governor Frémont. His wife took an active interest in the public school and gave the class in history a talk every Friday during the school year. However, the high altitude so seriously affected her health that she was forced to go to New York to recuperate. Two years after she left Prescott there was some talk of changing the capital to some other place. Frémont, who suffered from mountain fever, decided to try Tucson, where conditions in some respects were much worse, especially regarding sanitation. Life in Tucson was one round of excitement. First the powder magazine blew up, causing death and disaster; then came a cloudburst which raised havoc with the streets and buildings. At this time Miss Frémont was alone in Tucson, her father having gone to New York to purchase arms to fight the Apaches. He had an option on the famous Jerome mine, but with his customary ill luck failed to interest any Eastern capitalists in its development.

During the absence of her parents Miss Frémont

received word that Morrell's warehouse in New York had burned. In this fire the family lost many priceless possessions. Of these nothing was saved except the plates which had been prepared for his volume of memoirs and which had been placed under the sidewalk. Miss Frémont joined her father in New York, and soon after they went to Point Pleasant on the Jersey coast. Here the General had an attack of pneumonia and was ordered to Los Angeles to recuperate. He could ill afford to leave, but health was the first consideration, and so the family returned to the Golden State, arriving at Los Angeles on Christmas Eve, 1887. For a few days they were the guests of Judge Silent, as lodgings were at a premium owing to the great influx of tourists and homeseekers. A little later they obtained quarters at the Marlborough Hotel, where they remained several months. The friends of Frémont were anxious for his restoration as Major General, and in 1889 he returned to the East. In April, 1890, his appointment was confirmed by the Senate, "in view of the services to his country rendered by John C. Frémont, now of New York, as explorer, administrator, and soldier." This would afford him relief and freedom from care, and now he planned to return to California, there to make his permanent home. However, just prior to his leaving he was taken ill with ptomaine poisoning and, after a brief illness, entered upon the Great Adventure. His physician, Doctor William Morton, and his son, Lieutenant John C. Frémont, were with him when the end came. As he was sinking into unconsciousness he spoke of soon leaving for home. The doctor

asked him which home, and he whispered faintly, "California, of course," and immediately fell into the sleep that knows no waking. He died July 13, 1890.

Mrs. Frémont was very ill for some time after the death of her husband. Congress voted her a pension of two thousand dollars a year, and a home was presented to her by the women of Los Angeles. Here she lived for eleven years, dying in December, 1902. Up to the day of her death she tried to secure reimbursement for the Black Point property, but was unsuccessful. The trustees of Rockland Cemetery, Piermont, New York, voted a plot of ground, twenty by twenty-five feet, for the burial place of Frémont, where a monument could be erected to his memory. His son, Charles, selected the site as one which the General himself had chosen as his last resting place. In 1906 the State of New York erected a monument suitably inscribed. It stands some five hundred feet above the waters of the Hudson in the immediate vicinity of the tomb of Washington Irving and those of other notables.

There were a number of offers of burial places—in Wyoming, near Frémont Peak; Kansas City, at the mouth of the Kansas River. In San Francisco the Native Sons of the Golden West tried to obtain a site in Golden Gate Park. Joaquin Miller erected a tower to Frémont at his home, The Hights, Oakland, California. It is probable that Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, was the proper place to bury Frémont as it was only fitting that his dust should mingle with the soil of the state for which he had done so much and where he had in-

tended to make his permanent home. The Associated Pioneers of the Territorial Days of California, a New York society, made an effort to erect a monument at Piermont, and Mrs. Frémont was anxious that a young sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, whose talent she had discovered some years before, should make the design. After much discussion the matter was dropped and the final burial took place "in the open air for suns and snows to fall upon his grave as he so often unflinchingly met them in his life of toilsome duty done."

Frémont reposed in a Trinity vault until November 22, 1894, when he was placed in Rockland Cemetery, Piermont, New York. Public services of marked simplicity were held. He was laid away in the black clothes of a civilian and had requested that his coffin should be a cheap pine box covered with black cloth. There was no ostentation or military display. It was as he wished it to be—simple and informal. There were a number of distinguished people present. Rear Admiral Meade made the closing address, in which he said: "Every pulsation of his heart was for his country. If he had had his wish he would have died fighting for the colors he loved so well. His memory we revere. He was a pioneer in more senses than one. To him and to his work is largely due the great party that brought about the freedom of millions of our countrymen in the United States." "His was a life to honor," said his wife, expressing an almost universal sentiment. Twelve years after his death the remains of Jessie Benton Frémont were laid beside those of her gallant husband at Piermont, and there

together they rest in eternal slumber, undisturbed by the cares and vexations of this clamorous old world.

Frémont was essentially a man's man. His life was one of action from boyhood—action combined with an indomitable determination to do something worthy of his country. It was his enthusiasm and unflinching zeal that carried him across miles of treeless deserts beneath a burning sun and through the ice-bound, snow-garmented ranges of the West. He faced starvation in all its horrors; he underwent indescribable hardships in the acquisition of California; he added much to our store of scientific knowledge; he challenged slavery at a time when the Union was threatened with disruption and faced the hatred and malice that his advocacy of a free country inspired. He served the nation as a soldier and patriot and helped to weld into a fighting unit the hordes of raw recruits who sacrificed their lives that the Republic might endure. He met the reverses of life calmly and without a word of complaint. He was a man unafraid in all the many battles he waged throughout his gloriously dramatic career. He always remained the modest, patriotic, unassuming gentleman—the embodiment of a true American citizen. In courage, integrity, perseverance, veracity, and exemplary conduct he may well prove an inspiration to the generations yet to come. He nailed his name so high in the temple of Fame the ages cannot tear it down.

[END OF THE TRAIL]



Monument to General Frémont at Piedmont, Rockland Cemetery,
erected by State of New York.

A Condensed Biography

OF

JOHN CHARLES FRÉMONT

Major General, U. S. A.

Born, Savannah, Ga., January 21, 1813.

Second Lieutenant, U. S. Topographical Engineers, July 2, 1833.

First expedition to Rocky Mountains terminated October 17, 1842.

Brevetted Captain, U. S. A., July 31, 1844.

Second expedition to Rocky Mountains terminated July 31, 1844.

Thereafter was popularly known as "The Pathfinder."

Third expedition and survey west of the Mississippi to July 23, 1846.

Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Mounted Rifles, May 27, 1846.

Major Commanding California Battalion of Volunteers, July 23 to October 27, 1846.

Appointed Military Commandant of California September 2, 1846, and concluded Articles of Capitulation which terminated the war with Mexico, and left California permanently in the possession of the United States.

Appointed Civil Governor of the Territory of California, January 16, 1847.

Relinquished governorship, April 19, 1847.

Resigned from the Army, March 15, 1848.

Named the Golden Gate, June, 1848.

United States Senator from California, September 10, 1850, to March 4, 1851.

Nominated for President of the United States, June 19, 1856.

Major General, U. S. A., May 14, 1861.

Assumed command of Western Military Department, July 26, 1861.

Relinquished command, November 2, 1861.

Assumed command of Mountain Department, March 29, 1862.

Relieved, June 27, 1862.

Resigned from the Army, June 4, 1864.

Governor of Arizona Territory, 1878 to 1882.

By act of Congress, April 19, 1890, was appointed Major General, U. S. A.

Retired, April 28, 1890.

Died in New York, July 13, 1890.

JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT—HIS WIFE

Born, May 31, 1824. Died, December 27, 1902.

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